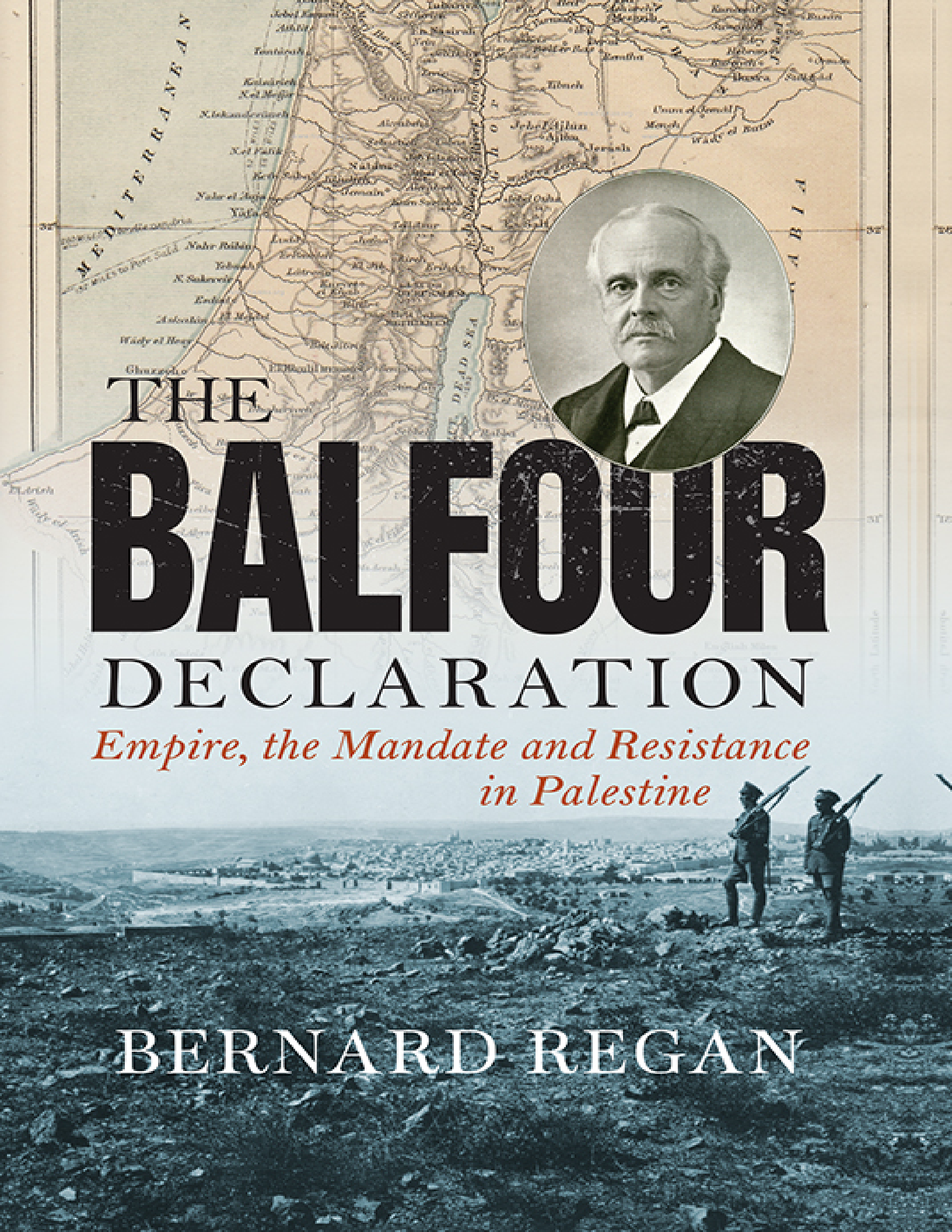

THE BALFOUR DECLARATION

Empire, the Mandate and Resistance in Palestine

BERNARD REGAN

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For
Carole Regan

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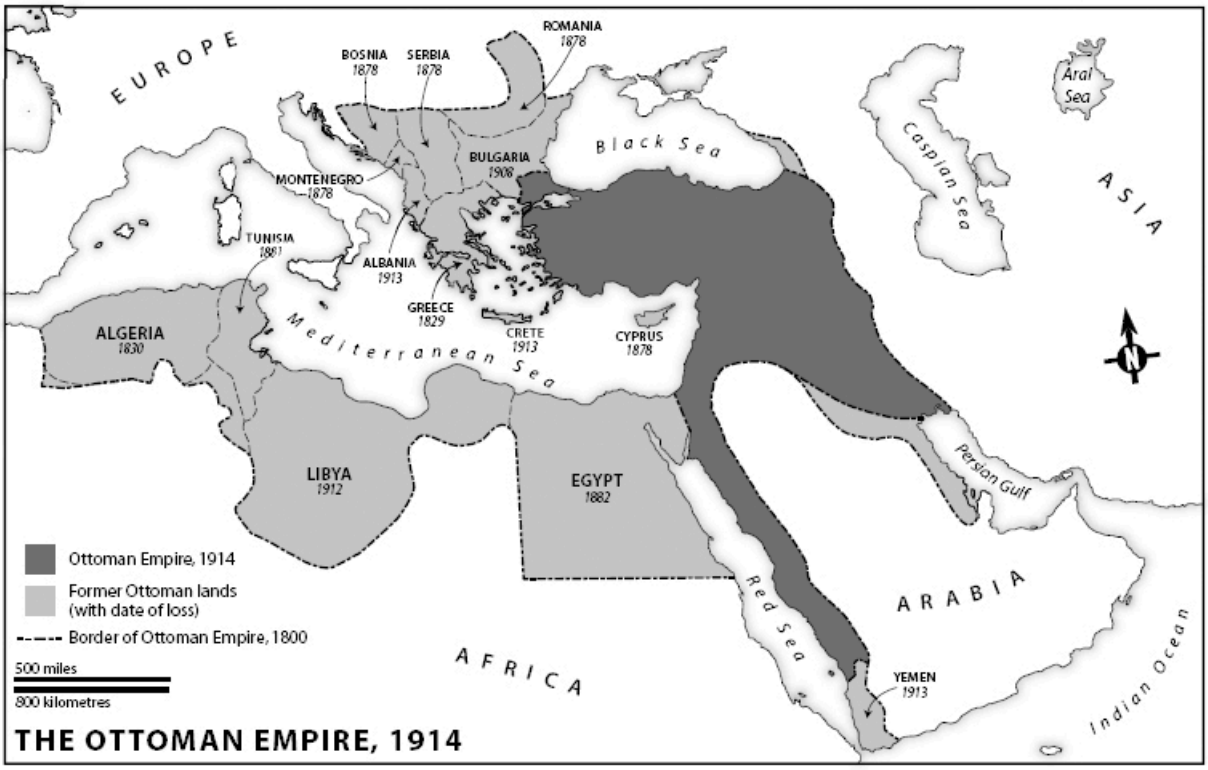
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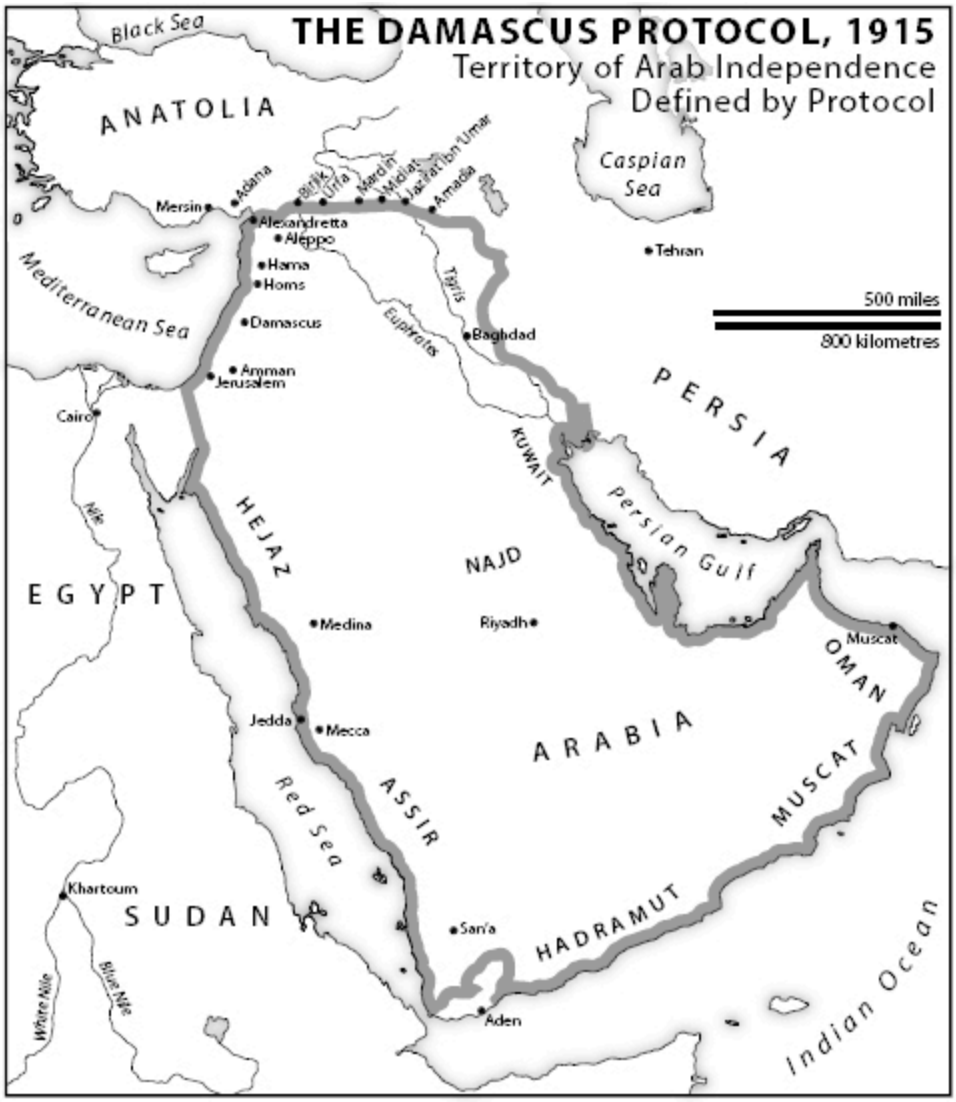
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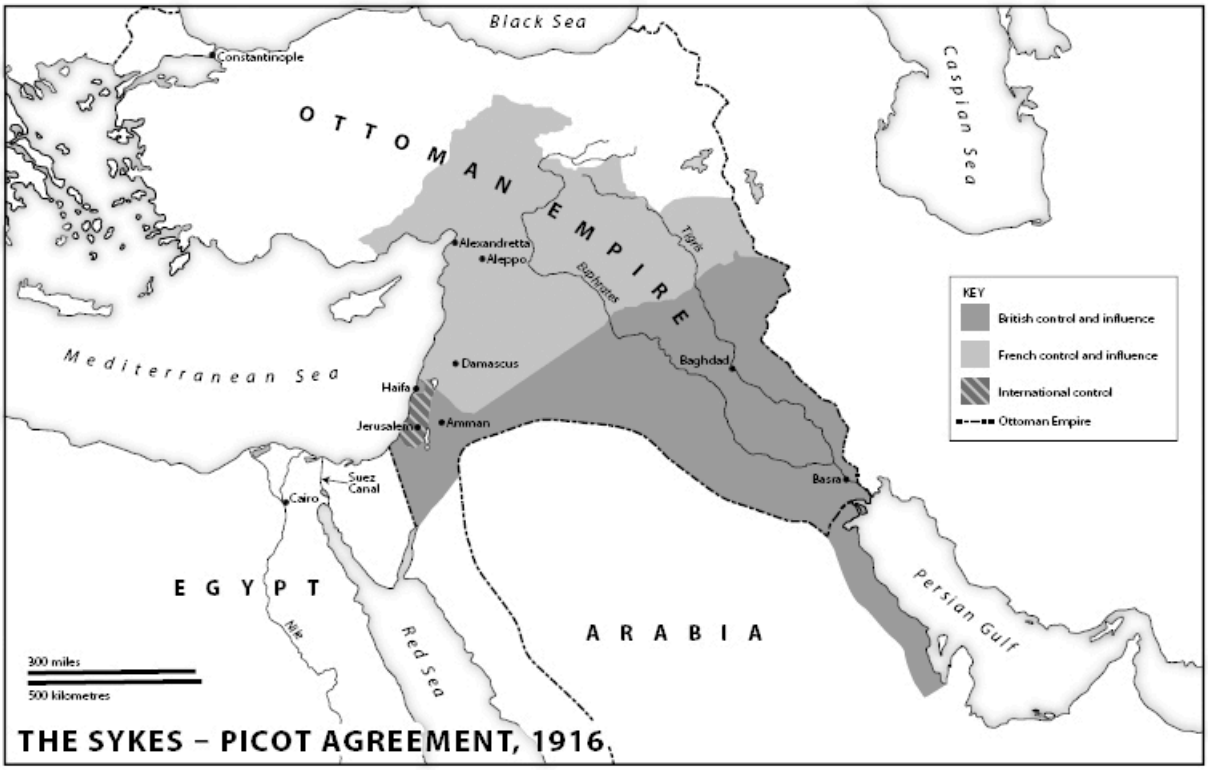

THE SYKES – PICOT AGREEMENT, 1916

Introduction

In late 1917 the foreign secretary, Lord Arthur James Balfour, on behalf of the British government, sent a letter via Lord Walter Rothschild to the Zionist Federation, declaring support for the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine. The policy expressed in the letter dated 2 November 1917 became known as the 'Balfour Declaration'. The adoption of this policy was to have far-reaching consequences for the future of the Palestinian people and the whole of the Near East.[1] The aim of this book is to trace the central role that imperialist interests played in shaping the development of British policy in Palestine, and which culminated in the establishment of the Israeli state in 1948. In particular, the book will cover the formative period of the British Mandate up until 1936.

The British had, for several decades before 1917, been a preeminent colonial power in the Near East, demonstrated most vividly by their invasion and occupation of Egypt in 1882. From the 1890s onwards dramatic changes began to take place in the nature of imperialism.[2] Whilst colonisation and colonialism would continue to exist, imperialism metamorphosed as a consequence of the rapid growth of monopoly finance capital. This phase of imperialism characterised by the expansion of finance capital typically resulted in fierce competition for the monopolisation of markets, control over valuable raw materials and domination of the lines of communication. This did not always result in imperial conquest and occupation. Some countries, as J.A. Hobson and V.I. Lenin argued, although

not imperial possessions became in effect semi-colonial or neo-colonial in nature, even though they were formally independent.[3]

Although occurring in a slightly earlier period, Irfan Habib, in his *Essays in Indian History*, has described the period between 1800 and 1850, when this process of transformation in the form of imperial rule was taking place, as corresponding to a change 'from seizing Indian commodities to seizing the Indian market'.[4] This dynamic would impact across the globe, but nowhere were the implications of these changes driven by imperialism felt more sharply than in the Near East.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, a huge industrial and technological expansion in Britain contributed to an accelerating growth of the economy and pressure to seek new overseas markets. Between 1840 and 1870, British gross domestic product (GDP) grew by 88 per cent, whilst between 1870 and 1913 it expanded by 124 per cent.[5] The comparable figures for France were 45 per cent and 100 per cent, whilst that for Germany, between 1870 and 1913, was 229 per cent. The increase in the USA over the same period was 426 per cent.[6] As a result of the emergence of finance capital, huge companies with international interests began to appear. The creation of international spheres of interest was driven by monopolies and distinguishes this phase of imperialism.[7] This process led to each of the imperial state powers championing the endeavours of companies based within their respective nation-states. Governments directly intervened against their rivals to ensure the most favourable conditions for their own companies. In the case of Britain, monopolisation was encouraged by the government, which took the view that the 'economic resources were intertwined with strategic priorities, and … the Foreign Office … accepted the need to reinforce private firms in areas of political sensitivity'.[8]

The export of capital gained momentum through the last three decades of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth. By 1914 British stock invested abroad, valued at £3.8 billion, constituted nearly a half of all foreign-owned assets. This figure was twice that of France and triple that invested by Germany.[9] London was the centre of this process, with over 500 establishments involved in foreign investment. Powerful institutions like Barings, Rothschild, Brown Shipley, Glyn Mills and Currie issued long-term investments, whilst smaller banks dealt with short-term financing.[10]

Barclays Bank, through its Jerusalem branch, became the issuing centre of the currency established by the British during the Mandate occupation.[11] It was vitally important to the British that they were able to maintain links with every part of their empire to protect their investments.

At the end of the nineteenth century, new finance capital institutions emerged elsewhere, fuelling worldwide competition on a much greater scale than ever before. In Germany there was a rapid growth of companies, in manufacturing especially, driven by the fusion between the banking and industrial sectors. Capital investment in industry expanded, between 1871 and 1913, from less than 10 billion to over 85 billion marks.[12] Germany became the second strongest industrial world power and, like Britain, was determined to protect its economic interests.[13]

Industrial and financial institutions, united in commercial enterprises, became powerful bodies seeking to exercise monopoly control over markets, driving them to gain access to and control over sources of raw materials.[14] This did not always follow a pattern of conquest, occupation and colonisation. More and more the government of Britain sought to create advantageous relations with those countries in which the raw materials were situated or, in the absence of accommodative partners, the establishment or maintenance of compliant regimes. Each imperialist power in turn sought to achieve a similar dominance over raw materials and markets.

These competitive forces lay behind the first truly global conflict. The war, which began in 1914, was fought between two opposing sets of allies: on the one hand, the Entente Powers, consisting of Britain, France and Russia, and on the other, the Central Powers of Germany, Austro-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire. Although the USA declared war on Germany in April 1917, its main contribution until June that year had been to provide material supplies and financial support to the Entente alliance. A further change took place when, following the revolution of October 1917, Russia left the group. The war was a manifestation of deep-seated economic, political and ultimately military rivalries between the imperialist powers generated by finance capitalism. In Britain itself, as in the other imperialist countries, the war had tectonic economic, social and political consequences for the country.[15]

Critically oil, increasingly vital for industrial and commercial development, became a central feature of that competition. The declared

value of British imports of oil products, in part driven by the war, increased elevenfold between 1900 and 1920.[16] Having helped to set up the Anglo-Persian Oil Company in 1909, the British government took complete charge of it in 1914.[17] British companies sought to gain a monopoly of the control of oil in Persia, but their efforts went beyond that. To secure their dominance in regions where oil might be found, Britain rushed to obtain exclusive rights to prospect in Kuwait and Bahrain. In 1915 the British signed a preferential agreement with Abdul Azziz ibn Saud to explore in the Nejd.[18]

The British focus on Palestine was a consequence of a variety of factors. Whilst it was not, at this stage, an important source of raw materials, like the gold of the Witwatersrand mines in the Cape Colony, nevertheless its strategic location was significant.[19] Maintaining lines of communication was an intrinsic necessity to imperialism. An imperial power capable of controlling trade routes could also control a rival's access to the sources of raw materials and potential markets. A strong British presence in the Near East would simultaneously restrict the ambitions of its foremost rival, German imperialism, and give it an advantage over the imperialisms of the French and other allies. More and more the production of oil in the north of Mesopotamia was important to the British and securing a Mediterranean outlet for it essential.[20] Furthermore, although Palestine, throughout the first decade of the Mandate, was neither a significant source of valuable raw materials such as oil nor a major trading partner, the British took advantage of their monopoly of that country's imports and exports.[21]

Building a British-controlled terminal at Haifa in Palestine cut the length of the supply line from Mosul in Mesopotamia and provided a place to refuel their Mediterranean fleet. Palestine would also provide a convenient refuelling stop for the growing air traffic between India and other parts of the empire to the east.[22] When the Lloyd George Cabinet was attempting to draft the map of Palestine, the expert invited to assist was the managing director of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company.[23] The negotiations, between the French, the British and later the USA, over access to and control over the extraction, exploitation and use of the oil in the area, were conducted between the representatives of major petroleum companies, governments and banks. The approach adopted epitomised the functioning

of finance capital and illustrates how wider imperialist ambitions drove British policy on Palestine.

In December 1918, the Petroleum Executive, under the chairmanship of Sir John Cadman, was concerned that Britain should retain an independent oil supply and not become reliant on the United States. He was involved in extensive negotiations both with the USA and the French over the exploitation of potential resources in the north of Mesopotamia and the creation of a terminal point on the Mediterranean Sea. The executive body he chaired concluded that 'any territorial adjustments in Syria or elsewhere wayleaves for pipelines etc from Mesopotamia and from Persia to the Mediterranean should be secured for British interests'.[24] The British wanted to secure control over both ends of the pipeline, at Mosul and Haifa. The negotiations ran on for at least two decades before they were completed and the pipeline built. *Time* magazine of 21 April 1941 emphasised the importance of the pipeline, describing it as the 'carotid artery of the British Empire'.[25]

Furthermore, the maintenance of secure links between London and the rest of the empire, and especially India, was essential to the British. The Suez Canal was vital to keeping the lines of communication to the empire open, and with it the capacity to deploy military forces to any part of it speedily. In order to ensure it remained open to British shipping, successive governments thought it necessary to have a land base in the vicinity from which to exercise control or intervene in the area of the canal. The land between the Mediterranean Sea and the Indian Ocean was becoming important for other reasons as well. Tsarist Russia had ambitions to gain influence or control over Persia or Afghanistan in order to gain access to a seaport on the Indian Ocean. A land bridge between the Mediterranean Sea and the Indian Ocean would offer an additional, or potentially an alternative, route by which the British could deploy reinforcements to India in the event it was threatened by Tsarist Russia.

Throughout World War I the British government faced a range of challenges to its power and influence on military, economic and political fronts. The war exposed both the strengths and weaknesses of the British Empire. Alongside the potential to draw on the vast resources of the empire to conduct its war efforts, Britain was simultaneously obliged to maintain effective links with the furthest colonies. In addition, the British had to try

to make sure that the rest of the empire responded in a similar manner. In this, Britain faced challenges from a number of directions. If it wanted to prosecute the war on the Western Front, it had to retain popular support at home. This meant, amongst other considerations, combining the supply of sufficient numbers of troops to fight battles and the equipment with which to fight, whilst sustaining a level of economic performance that would satisfy domestic demands.

Increasingly dependent on its ability to take advantage of the human and material resources it could command from its dominions and colonies, Britain was obliged to seek financial support from the USA. This raised political as well as economic questions. The post-war decades would witness economic convulsions, mass unemployment and poverty, financial crashes and social turbulence across the world as a consequence of the inter-imperial war. The contest was both an expression of British power and the means that began to undo its supremacy in the world, heralding its ultimate replacement by the USA.

Huge numbers of troops and vast amounts of equipment were absorbed in a confrontation that sapped all involved. The alliances that Britain developed throughout the course of the war were themselves fraught with difficulties. Directly confronted by Germany, France was unable to defend itself without backing from Britain. France, like Britain, had its own imperialist ambitions, including in the Near East, where its goals were potentially in conflict with those of its ally. Allies in the general scheme of the war, the British and the French were also rivals, but as the war continued the latter became increasingly dependent on the former. United on the battlefields of Europe, a covert struggle ensued in the Near East over the demarcation of their respective spheres of influence, especially those covered by the current states of Lebanon, Syria, Palestine, Israel, Jordan and Iraq.

The Russian Revolution of 1917 contributed to the destruction of the alliances that the British had put together to defend their interests. Refusing to prosecute the imperialist agenda, the Bolshevik government exposed the secret manoeuvring of their erstwhile allies, Britain and France, and declared their unequivocal support for the right of nations to self-determination. They repudiated the post-war League of Nations' imposition of mandates and the granting of suzerainty to the victors which had been endorsed by the ostensible champion of self-determination, President

Woodrow Wilson. Their opposition to the imperialist war reverberated around Europe, stimulating and coinciding with mutinies by soldiers at the Western Front and uprisings by masses of people in country after country.

The USA declared war on Germany on 6 April 1917, just a few months before the Russian disengagement, adding new but ill-prepared fighting resources to the indispensable financial backing they had already provided the British and their allies. Their direct entry into the combat, albeit towards the end of the conflict, was symptomatic of a transition from the dominance of the British to the emergence of the USA as a global force. Throughout the war the British, increasingly indebted to their ally, were sensitive to the opinions and reactions of the US administration to their decisions. Although the USA did not have a veto on British policies, the character of exchanges between British prime ministers and President Woodrow Wilson illustrated the symbiotic nature of the relationship and the increasing weight of US opinion on British decision making. These considerations influenced actions the British were to take both in relation to Ireland and to Palestine.

This outcome of the war revealed the changing nature of the inter-imperialist rivalry and the actual changes in the balance of power between the erstwhile allies and foes. Colonising imperialism faced increasing challenges on three fronts. New anti-imperialist movements were being established and were beginning to gain ground. The First Pan-African Congress was held in Paris in 1919 and the British West Africa National Congress in 1920. Nationalist uprisings occurred in Egypt (1919) and Iraq (1920), and the Irish War of Independence took place from 1919 until 1921, whilst in China the May Fourth Movement grew. On a second front the Bolshevik Revolution challenged imperialist hegemony, rejecting the notion that self-determination was a licence to be gifted by the imperialists. The third element of this challenge to the established imperial powers was the development of the USA as a world power. Although it had been a world economic power for some time, in the early twentieth century the USA expanded as a political and military force.[26] Despite the fact that it was Britain which had financially and militarily supported the Arab Revolt, it was to the USA that many of those in the Near East began to look as a potential mandatory power.

In the nineteenth century, further changes in the character of imperialism began to appear as it moved away from *colonisation* and *colonialism*.[27]

Colonisation has been described as the achievement of hegemony by the physical settlement of conquered territories, invariably involving the brutal displacement of indigenous peoples. Countries such as Australia and New Zealand come into this category. Colonialism, on the other hand, has been characterised as a process of achieving dominance without the introduction of colonising settlers but with the acquiescence of at least a layer of the indigenous population. India could be broadly described as coming into this grouping. Lenin drew attention to a further form of supremacy that existed in countries like Argentina and Portugal, which were neither colonised nor part of a colonial project but fell under the dominance of big powers. He saw this relationship between big and little states becoming a general system throughout the world.[28] In the twentieth century, Kwame Nkrumah, the first president of Ghana, called this practice *neo-colonialism:* 'The essence of neo-colonialism is that the State which is subject to it is, in theory, independent and has all the outward trappings of international sovereignty. In reality its economic system and thus its political policy is directed from outside.'[29]

Zionism was a nationalist revivalist response to the pogroms which were carried out, especially in Eastern Europe. The Zionist project of creating a homeland for the Jewish people was a minority current within the Jewish community. Those who established the movement recognised from its inception that to achieve their goal would require a powerful patron. The movement's leaders approached every major imperial power seeking their backing: British, German, French, Russian and Ottoman potentates were all canvassed.

The British government decision in late 1917 to support the project for the creation of a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine was motivated by a self-interest that coalesced with the ambitions of the Zionist movement. For the British the task was to integrate this project into the goal of sustaining the empire without appearing to replicate imperialist expansionism and colonisation. They hoped that Zionist settlement would provide a convenient surrogate, effectively implementing colonisation under the guise of national reconstruction. Zionism, hitherto a peripheral political movement within the Jewish community, became an important adjunct of British imperialist strategy in the Near East. Palestine was to become a colony but the settlers had no especial political, or indeed economic, allegiance to their patron.

This book focuses on the development of policy as expressed in the decisions of British governments. A wide variety of sources have been drawn on in the course of writing it, but I have paid special attention to the Cabinet papers held in the National Archives. The reason for this focus is a wish to examine the role that the British government played in determining what would happen following the occupation of Palestine in 1917. What these papers reveal is that the Balfour Declaration was not the product of an agreement between certain individuals or even certain groups of individuals but, first and foremost, the conscious endeavour of an imperialist power pursuing its own objectives.

Chapter 1 establishes the context within which the Balfour Declaration was written. Surveying the domestic and international challenges confronting the British in World War I, it explains why they chose to focus on Palestine and the Near East. The Suez Canal was crucially important to Britain for the preservation of the empire and there was an increasing need to guarantee access to and control over oil as an essential raw material. Both the British and their competitor imperialists of Germany and France coveted the same territory and for similar reasons. Whilst the British were in military conflict with Germany and its allies, they moved to build a countervailing system of alliances, embarking on two major initiatives. The first of these was to harness the ambitions of Arab rulers for independence from the Ottoman Empire through the McMahon–Hussein exchanges. The second was to seal their partnership with France through the Sykes-Picot agreement. Closer to home, the British faced the dual challenges arising from the problems created by the war on the domestic front together with the accelerating demand for independence rising in Ireland. Both threatened to undermine their capacity to continue the war and achieve the goals they had set.

Chapter 2 begins by examining the state of the Ottoman Empire and the expansion of colonisation in its former territories. In anticipation of an Ottoman defeat the British discussed a number of options, including the potential Muslim colonisation of areas around Basra in the state of Iraq. This suggestion was ultimately rejected in favour of support for the Zionist project to establish a homeland for the Jews in Palestine. This course of action, initially contested within the Zionist movement itself, was strongly opposed from both within the British Cabinet and by leading members of British Jewry. The Balfour Declaration expressed the British Cabinet's

promissory commitment to the creation of a homeland for the Jews in Palestine. Chapter 2 demonstrates how the Balfour Declaration itself was an inherently contradictory statement making a commitment to the Zionist Organisation whilst notionally expressing a responsibility to the indigenous population. The chapter explores the relationship between the growing demands for self-determination and the responses of the Arab opposition to the League of Nations' Mandate which, authored by the British government, replicated the ambiguity of the Balfour Declaration.

Chapter 3 explains how the changes in the Ottoman Empire which took place from the last half of the nineteenth century onwards had a particular effect on the lives of the *fellahin* (peasants), laying the basis for the dislocation of the existing feudalistic land relations in Palestine.[30] Building upon this reshaping of society, the British introduced political and economic measures which laid the foundation for the creation of a homeland for the Jews. The chapter explains how this reshaping of Palestinian society constituted a specific moment in its development and influenced the way in which nationalist aspirations emerged. These political and economic changes, imposed from above, asymmetrically distorted the development of Palestinian society. With the advent of the British occupation in 1917, the dominant traditional hereditary leaderships within society, the *a'yan* (notables) were confronted by a determined imperial power with overwhelming military might. From that date onwards, Palestinian society was confronted by a colonising enterprise which was able to operate with a degree of autonomy. The chapter explores the initial responses of the Palestinian people to these developments, which resulted in the involvement of younger generations and women in political activity. The British reaction, faced with this pressure, was invariably to establish some form of inquiry, which more often than not acknowledged the roots of the problem as being the process of colonisation but which failed to implement any changes that addressed the nationalist wishes of the majority of the population.

Chapter 4 considers how the Sykes–Picot agreement, adopted before the Balfour Declaration, was implemented by the French and the British, thwarting the ambition for *Bilad al-Sham*, a Greater Syria. The Arab forces, divided by their action, were obliged to adapt and abandon the programme of the Damascus Protocol. Palestinian political aspirations, which were formulated in a series of congresses, sought to challenge the British and the

colonisation process. In every sphere of Palestinian social and cultural life there was a response to the situation articulated through action – their aspiration for self-determination was expressed in the media and through political organisation. Representations by the Palestinian leadership to the British government and the League of Nations were systematically blocked or ignored. At the same time the economic terms, dictated by the British authority and exacerbated by the segregationist policies of the Zionist movement, fragmented Palestinian society. The consequential social phenomenon manifested itself through the emergence of new political party forms of organisation testing the established hereditary alliances.

Chapter 5 explores how these processes of social and economic change developed from the end of the 1920s through to the late 1930s, and on to the period immediately prior to the Palestinian armed uprising against British imperialism. The suppression of Palestinian ambitions took place alongside the growth of Zionist proto-state formations, which were always tolerated and at times encouraged by the British occupiers. The British intervened in the economy, awarding contracts for key economic sectors to pro-Zionist entrepreneurs, excluding any possibility that sections of the Palestinian bourgeoisie might play a comprador role. This partisanship on the part of the British led to a reshaping of Palestinian politics. Whilst initially Palestinian protests had tended to focus on Jewish settlers and Jewish immigration, the actions of the British authority came to be recognised as having prime responsibility for the denial of their right to self-determination.

British responses continued to exhibit contradictory tendencies. This was a consequence of the pressure from contending Palestinian and Zionist political and social forces, responses to external events threatening the British Empire and ultimately the result of attempts to implement the fundamentally contradictory Balfour Declaration. With the rise of Mussolini, Italian ambitions towards Ethiopia and events external to Palestine began to influence British actions once again. Continuously throughout the Mandate period the British chose to exercise their powers to deny the rights of the majority of the population of Palestine to self-determination, subjugating their aspirations to the interests of British imperialism and the ambitions of their ambivalent allies, the Zionists.

Chapter 6 concludes by drawing together the threads of these arguments, revealing how an understanding of the current plight of the land

of historic Palestine, which is now composed of the state of Israel and the occupied territory of the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Gaza strip, needs to begin with an examination of the role the British played in the Mandate years.

British imperialism, as implemented in Palestine, was of a specific neo-colonial character influenced by the outcome of World War I, the growth of the imperialism and the relationship with the Zionist movement. To understand fully the impact of the British occupation on the capacity of the Palestinian people to assert their right to self-determination, it is necessary to appreciate that Palestinian efforts to achieve this goal were affected by the specific character of British imperialism at the time, the distinctive context within which it sought to maintain its imperial influence and the special circumstances within which the Palestinian people were confronted by this global power.

The imperialism confronting Palestinian society at the beginning of the twentieth century was one that had changed significantly from that of the first half of the nineteenth century. The combined consequences of imperialist occupation coupled with Zionist settler-colonisation impacted on the economic and demographic development of Palestine in a unique manner, thus dislocating a pre-existing social entity and rupturing its development.

It was in this context of ongoing contestation with both British imperialism and an increasingly confident Zionist settler-colonisation that the Palestinian people faced the challenge of establishing and achieving self-determination.

The British-facilitated colonisation of Palestine by Zionist settlers, following the defeat of the Ottoman forces, did not constitute a complete departure from pre-existing imperial practices or indeed developments which had happened more locally. Debate took place surrounding the use of surrogates to undertake the role that settlers from Britain might have provided in the Near East. The Zionist settlers constituted a group that needed little or no incentivising. Casting Jews as a returning people, the British could present themselves as contributing to the fulfilment of an historic homecoming to Palestine rather than as imperialist expansionists. A congruent biblical narrative linking a Jewish identity, as articulated by political Zionism, with an imperialist perspective imbued with a Christian millenarianism, was invoked to legitimise the denial of the rights of the

Palestinian people. This narrative was intertwined with the ideas promoted by secular ideologues arguing that *res nullius* applied, permitting the occupation of notionally ownerless property by whoever asserted that claim. ‘A land without people for a people without land’ has its roots in the philosophy of the classical liberalism of John Locke.

1

War, Empire and Palestine

THE BRITISH AND WORLD WAR I

Between 1914 and 1918, Britain – the most powerful nation in the world, with the largest empire – was in the midst of a war involving the established and emerging great powers of the day. This war engulfed the whole of Europe and shaped the politics of the twentieth century.[1] As theatres of conflict developed in the Near East, parts of Africa and areas of the Far East, many British colonies and dominions were embroiled in the conflict. The fighting ultimately led to a redivision of political and economic spheres of influence, with global and historical repercussions.[2] By 1918 an estimated 70 per cent of the world's population lived in countries under the influence of the Entente Powers and many of the remaining 30 per cent lived in countries associated with the Central Powers.[3]

The war threatened Britain's economic and political preeminence in the world. Germany's rapid economic expansion and desire to gain markets for its products, expanding its maritime and territorial influence, inevitably led to confrontation with the most powerful obstacle to achieving those ends: the British Empire. The German alliance with the Ottoman Empire offered the prospect of disrupting if not completely destabilising British links to its empire in Asia and access to the increasingly significant commodity of oil. In this endeavour, the German government sought to develop its *Drang nach Osten* policy, turning towards the East, seeking to utilise the Ottoman Empire's geographical position and its status in the Muslim world to

dislocate relationships between the British, its empire and especially Muslims within the Indian population.

From a British population of 46 million, around 5 million troops were sent abroad by the British government, approximately 705,000 of whom were killed and 1,700,000 wounded.[4] Across its empire, military personnel were mobilised from the British dominions and colonies with nearly a million recruited from Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. A further 1 million soldiers and non-combatants were recruited from India.[5] No previous war had seen the mobilisation of human and material resources on this scale.

In Britain, during the course of the war, government spending rose from a pre-war figure of 8.1 per cent in 1913, to 38.7 per cent of GDP in 1917.[6] Britain, along with other members of the Entente, was obliged to purchase food and munitions from the USA and to take out loans to pay for the war which they financed in part by the sales of overseas assets. Britain ended the war in debt to the USA and lost the commanding position which it had held prior to 1914.[7] Other nations had to borrow to pay for their war efforts too. Italy needed financial backing from the Entente to play any part in the war, and this economic dependency had structural implications for the country as it did for others in a similar situation. Despite the £60 million credit which Italy obtained from Britain, following the 26 April 1915 Treaty of London the costs of the war forced the Italian government to continue to seek credits, pushing it further and further into debt to the USA.[8] In the period immediately before the war the US economy was in recession, and on the day the war began the Wall Street Stock Exchange closed because of panic about the possible repercussions for the country. However, by the end of the war its economic position was transformed.

Britain turned to the empire to supply the personnel and to the USA to supply the material and financial resources. The war had substantial repercussions domestically, as a higher fatality rate than previous conflicts increased the demands to replace those killed and wounded. Female employment rose by about 50 per cent, increasing the numbers of women working in jobs from which they had been excluded. In Britain agricultural production declined in the first three years as the emphasis switched to manufacturing war material. As average prices increased during the war, the value of real wages declined.[9] Moreover, the price of a range of goods

doubled in the four-year period.[10] By the end of the war British economic, and arguably political, power was diminished in comparison to the nineteenth century.[11]

There were repercussions too in the political sphere. A year after the declaration of war on 4 August 1914, the Liberal prime minister, Herbert Asquith, who had been prime minister for eight years, was forced to restructure his government, creating a coalition with the Conservatives. In December 1916, following a Cabinet split, he was replaced by his fellow Liberal, David Lloyd George, who established a War Cabinet, which he chaired, to conduct the war.[12] The new prime minister convened an Imperial War Cabinet through which some of the countries of the empire were consulted.[13] A typical meeting, such as that on 31 July 1918, was attended by the British prime minister and the prime ministers or representatives of Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Newfoundland alongside the secretary of state for war, Viscount Milner, chief of the imperial general staff, General Sir H.H. Wilson, and secretary of the War Cabinet, Sir M.P.A. Hankey. Lloyd George and the coalition government intended to engage the empire in backing their war drive.[14]

In December 1916 the members of the new Cabinet included Lord Curzon, president of the Council; Andrew Bonar Law, the chancellor of the exchequer; Viscount Milner; and the leader of the Labour Party, Arthur Henderson, MP. The majority of them had played leading roles in the empire and shared a common view of Britain's role in the world.[15] Curzon was a former viceroy of India from 1895 to 1906. Bonar Law was a staunch supporter of Sir Edward Carson, the opponent of Home Rule for Ireland. Alfred, Lord Milner, was an administrator with experience of conducting colonial wars, especially in South Africa. When the war was declared the Parliamentary Labour Party, in opposition to the view of its then chairman, Ramsey MacDonald, voted for the £100,000,000 war credits and elected the pro-war Arthur Henderson to replace him. In recognition of this pro-war stance, Lloyd George invited the Parliamentary Labour Party to nominate a member to the War Cabinet, who then acted as a conduit for government views and in turn kept the Cabinet informed of changing popular opinions, especially in the trade union movement.

The impact of the war was felt on the home front. In its day-to-day business the War Cabinet dealt with a considerable number of domestic and international concerns, analysing their significance, their implications for the conduct of the war and their consequences for British war aims.[16] Having sufficient troops to fight the war was essential, and the Cabinet frequently discussed recruitment and the number of men eligible by age and fitness for conscription as difficulties arose, for example, out of the necessity to exempt certain groups of workers such as those in armaments production.[17]

A wide variety of domestic topics, such as the prices of staple commodities and levels of productivity, occupied the business of their meetings.[18] Industrial disputes which might directly impact on the supply of materials for the war received particular attention. Meeting after meeting recorded discussions about labour problems, including strikes by sheet metal workers and plane makers in Coventry, the rates of bonuses to be paid to specific groups of workers and the settlement of industrial disputes. During the final year of the war, 1918, nearly 1 million British workers were on strike whilst in Germany the number was around 400,000 workers.[19]

The War Cabinet paid close attention to the mood of workers, especially amongst those involved in industrial action, scrutinising levels of productivity as a barometer of support for the war itself. They noted the reactions of workers to political developments elsewhere, especially following the 1917 Russian Revolution with the establishment of the Bolshevik government and their critical decision to withdraw from the war. At one stage the influence of the Bolsheviks was considered so alarming that Sir Edward Carson was charged with preventing the press statements of 'Trotzki [*sic*] and Lenin' being published.[20] The War Cabinet minutes record a report by the Labour Party member Mr Barnes, who, 'stated that when he had mentioned the name of Trotzki [*sic*] at his meetings in Scotland during the past week, it had been received with cheers'.[21] These domestic topics were prominent on the War Cabinet's agenda, although the bulk of the items were concerned with details about the war itself, developments at the front, the availability of the means to continue fighting and crucially how to finance it.[22] The Cabinet minutes of 9 December 1916 note that UK spending in the USA was running at $60 million a week and

that a loan of $1,500 million would be needed by March 1917. From time to time developments threw up new challenges or posed old ones in new ways, resulting in the business of meetings being rearranged as newer pressing items came to the fore.[23] Discussion ranged from responsibilities on the disposition of the army at the fronts, problems of conscription, consequences of the actions of foes and allies on military developments, the availability of bread, meat and cheese, the price of milk and the provision of oats for horses racing in the winter.[24]

IRISH INDEPENDENCE AND THE WAR

Ireland was considered by the British government as part of the Home Front: a domestic issue. This was not the view of Irish nationalists, who were of the opinion that the fight for independence was a struggle against British imperialism. During the war, Britain faced a sharpening struggle for Irish independence which had already wrought political damage to the fortunes of the Liberal Party. It remained an unresolvable problem before, during and after the war.

Troops could not be conscripted from Ireland, rebellion forced the deployment of soldiers to maintain order and the political ignominy of defeat at the hands of nationalists threatened to dent British credibility as a world power. If Ireland, then what of India, Egypt or other parts of the empire?[25] Domestically the struggle for Irish independence had threatened both a parliamentary and a constitutional crisis, and had exposed fissures within the British military. The Easter Rising in 1916, at the outset emblematic, nevertheless was indicative of the emergence of struggles for self-determination which, in the aftermath of the war, would develop elsewhere in the British Empire. The struggle by the oldest of Britain's colonies for independence was a mark of the times, a further indication of the beginning of the end of the colonialist period of British imperialism.

The gravity of the impact on Britain of the intensification of the campaign for Irish independence was evidenced by the fact that it had precipitated a constitutional crisis in 1912 and caused an act of rebellion amongst pro-Unionist officers in the British army in Ireland in 1914.[26] It was in essence a struggle for self-determination, the outcome of which threatened to have national and international ramifications for the British government, jeopardising its credibility as a power capable of controlling its

own empire. The Irish diaspora, in the USA and Australia for example, was a material factor in Cabinet decision making about the course of the war itself. The Cabinet was mindful that US opinion towards their decision making on Ireland might affect the latter's enthusiasm to support the war effort.

The British government was antagonistic to Home Rule for Ireland and leading protagonists in the campaign against independence were members of the War Cabinet. Prominent in their ranks were figures like Sir Edward Carson, a Unionist leader of the parliamentary anti-Home Rule current. In 1912 Carson had been one of the initiators of the paramilitary Ulster Volunteers whose members pledged to oppose by arms attempts by any government to grant Home Rule or to split the northern, predominantly Protestant, parts of Ireland from the rest of the United Kingdom. Carson became a member of the Cabinet in December 1916 as First Lord of the Admiralty and joined the War Cabinet in July 1917.

Whilst the Home Rule Act had been passed on 18 September 1914, the government decided to postpone its implementation until the end of the 'European War', a move that angered those seeking independence.[27] Armed rebellion was a constant concern to the Cabinet, as reports increased of people across Ireland openly conducting military drills in preparation for an armed revolt. According to some estimates, 'in August 1914, there were over a quarter of a million men enrolled in citizen militias in Ireland'.[28] In Dublin a banner proclaiming 'Neither King nor Kaiser' hung over Liberty Hall, the headquarters of the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union and of the Irish Citizen Army, both led by James Connolly.

Even after the Easter Rising, industrial disputes in Ireland, such as a railway workers' strike, were viewed as having the potential to become a focus for the struggle for independence. Under the heading 'Irish Railways General Strike', the minutes of the Cabinet meeting of 16 December 1916 record that 'organised labour had joined hands with organised political force and it was evident that the Irish Nationalist party were ready to take charge of the railway trouble and use their political power to secure a settlement at their dictation'.[29] Although the Easter Rising was suppressed, the demands raised by the rebel forces resonated across Ireland. Whilst a law was passed in the British Parliament authorising conscription, prompted

by a crisis of manpower on the Western Front in early 1918, it was never implemented.

The government's handling of events in Ireland had repercussions well beyond Britain's shores. The War Cabinet was sensitive to reactions to any measures they took and were concerned about the potential influence of Irish émigré communities, especially on the governments in the USA and Australia.[30] These fears were not unfounded. In the USA a negative reaction to British policy on Ireland might influence the federal government's assistance to the British war effort, whilst in Australia it might hinder the recruitment of men to join the fight.

An example of the way the Cabinet weighed these considerations could be seen at a meeting on 21 December 1916, just six months after the British suppression of the Easter Rising, when a debate took place on peace proposals to end the war in Europe drafted by President Woodrow Wilson. Some 3,000 prisoners had been arrested following the Easter Rising, and on the same agenda as Wilson's proposals was the fate of some 350 Irish prisoners who were still held in England.[31] In the debate on their fate, Henry Duke, chief secretary for Ireland and a lawyer by profession, was more influenced by political considerations than legal ones. He put to the War Cabinet that it would be more beneficial to relationships with the USA if the men were released. Indeed, he stressed that it was 'desirable … to foster the impression in the United States … that the new Government was approaching the Irish question in a generous but not timorous spirit'.[32] Of course, it should be remembered that one of the leading figures arrested was Eamon De Valera, a citizen of the USA, for whom the Consulate made representations concerning his fate. The Cabinet was anxious to retain the material and financial backing of the US administration for its war efforts and adapted its policies on Ireland, as on other issues, to secure that support.[33] This eagerness to ensure that the US administration was not alienated by Cabinet decisions was no doubt influenced by Britain's growing economic dependency on that country, and the hope that at some point they would enter the war as combatants themselves. Politically and economically related judgements made by the British government during the course of the war were continuously being influenced by the attitudes adopted by the USA as an emerging world power. Even if the USA did not intervene militarily until 1917, its economic weight was felt across the

world.[34] Having faced economic recession in 1914, the USA profited greatly from the war, selling more than $2 billion worth of goods to the allies. Beneath the surface tectonic shifts were taking place between the rival groups of powers, and importantly within them.[35] The reality of the changed relationship was reflected in the decision by Britain to agree to the 1922 Washington Naval Treaty, accepting parity with the USA on the capital ships, the key battleships of their respective navies.

THE EMPIRE: SECURING THE LINKS

The War Cabinet and the whole government viewed the maintenance of links with the empire as vital to ensuring the free flow of human and material resources necessary to fight the war. Preserving the link between Britain and India was their main preoccupation. They debated how best to do this given the variety of challenges that they faced. It was a matter they returned to more than once.

Lord Kitchener, secretary of state for war in Asquith's Cabinet and a former vice consul in Anatolia, had earlier in his career surveyed Palestine and adjacent areas. Kitchener was convinced that in the years ahead, Russia would continue to pursue its ambitions to gain access to the Mediterranean Sea and to the Persian Gulf. He viewed Russia as a significant threat because its interest in Afghanistan had the potential to disrupt vital military and trade routes to India. He was, moreover, apprehensive about the ambitions a post-war revivified France would have towards Syria. He believed that if France took control of Syria it would place it close to the Nile Delta, meaning the Suez Canal, and therefore would become a threat to Egypt as well.[36] Premised on the defeat of the Ottoman Empire, his *Memorandum Alexandretta and Mesopotamia*, submitted to the Cabinet on 16 March 1915, proposed the development of a railway line connecting the Persian Gulf to the Mediterranean Sea as an additional alternative route to the colonies.[37] The building of the line would greatly speed up the deployment of army reserves to the area should they be needed.

His paper focused on an analysis of the military significance of the area, but went further in showing an acute awareness of its economic importance. In countering the potential threat to the Suez Canal, he argued that the development of the Alexandretta–Mesopotamia link made good military and economic sense, because '(Alexandretta) … affords a natural

Mediterranean terminus for the Baghdad Railway … an excellent anchorage for transports and for merchant shipping (and) it lends itself readily to defence by shore batteries'.[38] He suggested that these advantages provided, in Alexandretta, an excellent centre from which 'to guard our interests in the Persian oil fields, and to control the land route from the Mediterranean to the Persian Gulf, which will eventually become our most direct and quickest line of communication with India'.[39]

The Cabinet however, following discussions, rejected Kitchener's proposal that Alexandretta become the terminus for British operations in the eastern Mediterranean in favour of the more southerly port of Haifa in Palestine. Choosing Haifa had the advantage that it would avoid encroaching on areas the French aspired to control. Additionally it would enable them to construct a railway from the Mediterranean to Mesopotamia, which was British owned. They considered the railway a strategic necessity and a commercially viable proposition.[40] The line which the committee suggested would be to the south of what they assessed would and indeed did become the French sphere of interest after the war, through the granting to them of the Mandate for Syria. A telegram, under the initials 'A.H.' and dated 14 March 1915, proposed to the Cabinet that Mesopotamia come under the control of the government of India. A further note from General Sir Edmund Barrow, military secretary to the India Office, described Palestine as 'the connecting link between' Mesopotamia and Egypt. The British government had of course already identified the countries lying further south – Palestine, Transjordan and Mesopotamia – as important to focus on in order to guarantee a secure link from the Persian Gulf to Haifa.[41]

After the rejection of Kitchener's proposals, further discussions took place. In April 1915, Sir Maurice De Bunsen, former British ambassador in Spain and Austria, was appointed by the prime minister, Herbert Asquith, to chair a committee, 'to consider the nature of British desiderata in Turkey in Asia in the event of a successful conclusion of the war'.[42] The composition of the committee, which included representatives of the Foreign Office, India Office, Admiralty, War Office and the Board of Trade, reflected the variety of interests that were involved. The proposals of the De Bunsen Committee, which reported on 30 June 1915, were based on the assumption of a British victory over the Ottoman Empire.[43] Sir Mark Sykes presented

the final report to the Committee of Imperial Defence in July 1915. The report, illustrated by maps, included alternative scenarios. It was, however, presented on the basis that 'any attempt to formulate (British desiderata) must as far as possible be made to fit in with the known or understood aspirations of those who are our Allies to-day, but may be our competitors to-morrow'.[44]

The committee summarised the wishes of the respective parties, noting that the French government wanted Cilicia and Syria, which, to the minds of their ally, included Palestine and the Christian holy places.[45] Apart from this potential point of friction the committee also expressed concern about the danger of Britain overreaching itself, since 'our Empire is wide enough already, and our task is to consolidate the possession we already hold, and pass on to those who come after an inheritance that stands four-square to the world'.[46] These anxieties included, of course, disquiet about Russia's ambitions and potential threats to Mesopotamia, Afghanistan and, of vital importance, India.

The clear focus in the report was the role of any agreement regarding 'Asiatic Turkey', as it linked to 'one of the cardinal principles of our policy in the East, our special and supreme position in the Persian Gulf'.[47] Pre-eminent amongst the prerequisites that the committee identified were economic goals, which included the 'prevention of discrimination of all kinds against our trade throughout the territories now belonging to Turkey, and the maintenance of the existing important markets for British commerce', coupled with 'security for the development of undertakings in which we are interested, such as oil production, river navigation, and [the] construction of irrigation works'.[48] The purpose of the work on the irrigation systems was to develop the productivity of Mesopotamia, which the committee estimated could bring 'back to cultivation 12,000,000 acres of fertile soil … [which] would in time of emergency provide a British granary which should go far to relieve us of dependence on foreign harvests'.[49] The document constituted a classic imperialist plan, designed to ensure British control over raw materials, British domination of markets and British investment in agricultural production, intended to benefit domestic consumption.

THE SUEZ CANAL: MAKING THE CIPHERS VALUABLE

Whilst to some Palestine appeared to have little or no intrinsic economic significance, it did have military, political and commercial importance. This was due to its proximity to the Suez Canal, its location at the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea and its role as a land terminal linking to the Persian Gulf. This view was strengthened with the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, bringing increased trade between Europe, Asia, East Africa and Australia. In November 1875, without parliamentary or Cabinet approval, the then prime minister, Benjamin Disraeli, aided by his close friend Lord Rothschild, moved swiftly to buy a major shareholding in the canal at the cost of £4 million.[50] His decision was influenced by the fact that Britain was already involved in the economy of Egypt following earlier investment – by 1876 Britain had become the main creditor for the bankrupt country.[51]

Beyond Egypt, trade with the British Empire to those countries which could be accessed through the canal had become a priority for Disraeli.[52] In 1876 the Lord Chancellor, Hugh Cairns, summed up the position when he wrote to Disraeli: 'It is now *the Canal and India;* there is no such thing now as India alone. India is any number of ciphers; but the Canal is the unit that makes these ciphers valuable.'[53] The canal was critical to Britain securing a dominant trading role and thereby control over emerging markets.

The canal was especially important to the British because control of Palestine, either by Germany or its Ottoman ally, would threaten both the canal and any land route across the Near East.[54] Germany, ambitious to develop its influence in the region and fully appreciating the importance of the canal to the British, planned to build a railway link between Berlin and Baghdad.[55] Like the Liberal prime minister, Lord Palmerston, in the 1830s, the coalition government of Lloyd George initially opposed a break-up of the Ottoman Empire, which they regarded as a block to Russian ambitions in the Near East, Afghanistan and India. In the event that Constantinople might no longer be capable of thwarting Russian schemes, Lloyd George's government considered ways in which London might maintain a secure route to India and the colonies of the East.[56] A land connection between the Mediterranean Sea and the Persian Gulf would save considerable time and therefore be of benefit to trade and the deployment of troops to India if it were called for.[57] However, a land link alone would not cope with the scale of trade between Britain and India.

Before 1914 Britain had complete naval superiority that encompassed the world. Additionally, it was the biggest ship builder and 52 per cent of the world's trade was carried in British vessels.[58] The scale of the exports from India can be assessed from the War Cabinet *Report for 1918*, which estimated that the annual value of Indian war exports had reached £110,000,000.[59] In certain areas the imports were directly connected to the conflict. India contributed large quantities of sandbags and products made from jute for the war effort. The value of the jute goods alone stood at £38,000,000 in 1918. India was the source of a variety of other raw materials essential to the war, including wheat and manganese (used in the production of steel).[60]

Whilst the Suez Canal was a vital link to India for the war, it was also important because of trade generally. British shipping carried the overwhelming majority of goods between Britain and India, with Indian shipping, even by 1924, accounting for a mere 2 per cent.[61] The trade was not only one way. India was in turn a major importer, purchasing more than 67 per cent of its goods from Britain in 1909–10. This was a relationship favourable to the British and therefore one they were anxious to maintain.[62]

India provided much more than raw materials to the British war effort. With a population in excess of 300 million, British imperial power looked on India as an almost limitless source of recruits for the military. It has been estimated that between 1914 and 1918 over 1.5 million men left India to serve with the British army, including over 700,000 troops who fought in the Near East and an estimated 140,000 who fought on the Western Front in France and Belgium.[63] The seizure of the Suez Canal by Germany or the Ottoman Empire, isolating India and jeopardising British ambitions for the whole of the Near East, would have been a major blow to its economy and its capacity to wage the war.

OIL AND PALESTINE

Both the Kitchener and the De Bunsen reports paid close attention to the importance of economic issues in relation to the development of British strategy on the Near East, and especially access to and control over oil resources. Oil was becoming increasingly important as a commodity, and although none had been discovered in Palestine the country was well placed to act as a terminal for an oil pipeline to the oilfields further east, as well as

providing a port for British shipping in the eastern Mediterranean for its onward transportation. Politicians had already begun to appreciate the much wider potential for the use of oil. As a French representative at the Anglo-French Conference on the Turkish Settlement was to comment on 22 December 1919, 'Like iron and coal, petroleum has assumed a vital part in the independence and "self-defence" of all the nations of the world.'[64]

New forms of warfare, like the tank, the use of aeroplanes, the need for more flexible forms of transportation generally and of course the conversion of warships from coal to oil, accelerated the demand for the fuel. On 17 June 1914, Parliament had made the decision to purchase 51 per cent of the stock of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company in order to avoid potential dependency on non-British companies such as Royal Dutch/Shell or Standard Oil. During the war, when guaranteeing adequate supplies of oil had become a major worry for all belligerents, access to and control over reserves became even more important.[65] Bearing these concerns in mind, and following the defeat of the Central Powers, Britain began to define geographically its sphere of influence by securing Palestine as the base from which to oversee the whole region.[66]

Whilst the British government took the view that individual territories were of greater or lesser political or economic weight, the empire itself was seen as an entity, ruled from London and linked by a chain of secure refuelling ports. The Conservative Party MP, L.S. Amery, in his 20 May 1917 secret memorandum, *The Russian Situation and its Consequences*, advised the War Cabinet that Palestine was a vital link. He believed that Palestine was critical to Britain's ability to retain the East African colonies and had implications for the continued security of the entire empire against the threat of the Central Powers. Amery argued:

> Even if we retain East Africa the position will be extremely serious unless Palestine can be secured. For without the control of Palestine it will be impossible either to secure eventual railway communication between Egypt and Mesopotamia, or to prevent a Turkish reoccupation or reabsorption of Arabia, and the collapse of the whole Arab movement to which our prestige in the Moslem world is now committed. With a reorganised German-Turkish Army, as a vanguard of the Armies of Central Europe, in a position to strike effectively either at Baghdad or the Suez Canal, and with submarine bases in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Red Sea, our position both in Mesopotamia and in Egypt would be increasingly precarious, The collapse of Russia has, in fact, made Palestine, of the issues still left undecided by the war, one of the most vital for the whole future of the British Empire.[67]

Amery even suggested that should the defence of Palestine become too expensive, then perhaps it should be put under the control of the USA.[68] A setback for the British in the Arab world might affect Britain's prestige in the 'Moslem world' more generally and might encourage Muslims to become more actively engaged in the developing anti-British pro-independence alliance in India.[69] Nevertheless, given the USA's entry into the war on 6 April 1917, Amery felt comfortably able to argue that the Western allies would eventually be successful, because of the 'almost inexhaustible reserves of America'.[70] This backup, of course, included both the prospective numbers of soldiers as well as the vast economic and productive capacities of the USA.[71]

Revolutionary Russia's withdrawal from the Allied Powers, it was reasoned, would now make its former ally France more dependent on the 'strength and security of the British Empire'. Furthermore, it would put even greater pressure on the French to back British ambitions in the region.[72] 'France has now a direct interest in our retention of East Africa and of Mesopotamia, and in our securing Palestine, which she would not have had if Germany had been crushed, or if the Central European block had been broken in the Balkans or at the Dardanelles.'[73] The British viewpoint was that, as a consequence of the revolution in Russia and the added potential of the entry of the USA into the war, they were gaining advantage both over their German foe and their French ally.

Amery, the author of the memorandum, had Zionist sympathies and had encouraged Ze'ev Jabotinsky, the Zionist politician, to form a Jewish legion in the British army. In this document, however, there is no compelling evidence that his focus on Palestine was an attempt to insinuate a pretext for the creation of a Jewish homeland. For him, Palestine had a significance beyond its geographical boundaries because its loss would have implications for the 'very existence of the British Empire' and the independence of Britain itself.[74] Palestine, he argued, was an integral part of the empire's comprehensive geo-maritime plan and defending it was therefore both a tactical and a strategic imperative.

Another Conservative MP, William Ormsby-Gore, outlined, on 14 June 1917, the possible implications of the changes taking place in Russia for the future conduct of the war. In a paper written for the Cabinet, *Review of the Near Eastern Situation*, he explained that Russia's withdrawal from the war

would benefit the Ottoman Empire. He reaffirmed the significance for Britain of the outcome of the war in the Near East. Building on Kitchener's earlier memorandum, he argued that it would have implications not only for the empire, but for more wide-ranging economic reasons. In his words, 'control of this area gives the controller the essential strategic and economic mastery of the communications between the Mediterranean Sea and the Indian Ocean, between Asia and Africa, and of the natural outlet for more than half Russia's agricultural produce besides the produce of her great undeveloped southern coalfield.'[75] The British were eager to secure their economic interests but were additionally intent on thwarting the ambitions of rival powers even when they were deemed allies. Ormsby-Gore wanted to ensure British control over Russia's resources to prevent its cheap coal undercutting that of Britain on the world market. Additionally, cheap coal from Russia could be used to stimulate an industrial revolution in the Near East and India, resulting in the production of goods that could undersell British ones.

Imperialist interests were evolving from a focus on territorial acquisition and the retention of colonies to the control of natural resources, restricting access to trade routes or markets and generally inhibiting the economic development of others in the region. There were growing pressures to secure oil reserves, since it was four times more efficient than coal and would greatly benefit British shipping. British interests were already well established in this field before the outbreak of the war. Winston Churchill, MP, appointed First Lord of the Admiralty in 1911, had ensured that by 1912 the navy ships were converted to using oil.[76] He was anxious to ensure British control over the oil, most of which was supplied from the Iranian reserves, and consequently secured a 51 per cent stake for the government in the Anglo-Persian Oil Company, the principal producer of fuel from Persia.[77] The British were heavily reliant on the USA for their oil and having supplies which they could directly control would give them greater independence.

The importance of gaining access to and control over the supply of oil was equally reflected in the German attempt, after the Russian Revolution, to try to gain control of the Baku oilfields. German geologists were well aware of the availability of oil around Mosul from before the war.[78] The future of Baku was a central question during the protracted Brest-Litovsk

negotiations at which Leon Trotsky, acting for the revolutionary government, delayed signing any sort of treaty in an attempt to hold on to the region and its oil. The onslaught faced by Germany on the Western Front in the last months of the war caused it to downplay the importance of the negotiations with the new leaders of Russia and eventually abandon its interests in the Caucasus. The Ottoman army briefly won a victory at Baku only to retreat following the Treaty of Mudros signed on 30 October 1918. Nevertheless, the attention paid to the future of the Caucasus echoed British focus on the oil-rich lands of Mesopotamia and Persia.[79] Germany, like Britain, without any of its own sources of oil, had seen Baku as a potential solution.

Oil was to continue to be a priority, not only for Britain but also for its ally France. After the war, discussions with the French on 22 December 1919 had covered a wide range of topics arising from the defeat of the Ottoman Empire. These revolved, in part, around the precise route that the border between the French and British Mandate territories should take. Lord Curzon, secretary of state for foreign affairs, led the British side during the discussions. The British, in accordance with De Bunsen's suggestion, were keen to ensure that the border would be drawn in a way that would guarantee British control over any railway running from the Mediterranean to Mesopotamia. For their part, the French were trying to make sure that there would be 'a satisfactory agreement regarding the oil in this area'.[80] The chief secretary for political and commercial affairs at the French Foreign Office, M. Bethelot, sought to ensure that French interests in relation to oil might be secured, given that its availability from Baku and Batum might be jeopardised following the revolution in Russia.[81]

The building of railways was an equally important feature of the imperialist project, requiring huge levels of investment, opening new markets and expediting trade.[82] Britain, Germany and France each saw the advantages that might arise from an expanded railway system in the region. The future of Mosul was an important part of their considerations, as was the precise path that the railway might follow from Acre to Mosul. The French saw this as a major question given that the railway might be extended to India, Tehran and even China, thereby duplicating the Trans-Siberian Railway with a new line running from Constantinople to Peking. In addition to this, they foresaw the possibility of a Trans-Persian line from

Moscow to Karachi running along the Indian Ocean through Vladikavkaz, Tiflis, Tabriz, Ispahan and Kerman.[83] The railway project tied in with the perspectives of expanded trading opportunities and of controlling the oil in the region.

GERMANY, THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION AND PALESTINE

In his May 1917 memorandum, Amery had presented an analysis of the developing situation in Russia.[84] He assessed the impact of Russian internal developments on the war and their ramifications for the balance of power between the Central Powers and the Allied Powers. He painted a more alarming scenario than that described by Kitchener in his March 1915 *Memorandum Alexandretta and Mesopotamia*. Forecasting the expansion of German influence, Amery argued that the global threat arising from an expansion of German interests would impact directly on the British colonies, identifying Palestine specifically as their target. 'The outstanding result of the change in Russia's position,' he explained, 'is that of Germany's two main projects – the creation of a Middle-Europe extending from Hamburg to the Red Sea and Persian Gulf, and the displacement of the British Empire by German world domination – the former is practically made good, and, but for accidents, beyond our power to defeat.'[85]

Amery argued that, in the wake of any changed situation in Russia, it was crucial to build an effective alliance to respond to the changing circumstances and the coming to power of a government less interested in continuing the war. The reality was that the Bolsheviks, whose influence was growing, were totally opposed to continuing Russian participation in the war. He suggested that the territorial ambitions of France, Italy and Greece had to be accommodated, and somewhat exaggeratedly compared the predicament of Britain with that of those smaller and less powerful countries of Europe that had been overpowered earlier in the war by Germany and its allies. He held the view that 'it is not only Belgian or Serbian liberty, but British liberty and the very existence of the British Empire which are directly threatened by the great military Empire which Germany has built up for herself in the course of the war – a Power whose hand will be simultaneously at our throat in the English Channel and the Suez Canal, unless we can still drive her out of Belgium and Palestine.'[86]

The future of Britain and the defence of the British Empire, he asserted, were indivisible and Palestine was essential to maintaining their well-being.

The task, Amery concluded, was to minimise any advantage that Germany might gain as a result of the Russian withdrawal from the war, through action by the Entente Powers to achieve 'the liberation of Belgium or the conquest of Palestine and Syria'.[87] The memorandum predicted the possibility that Germany might form a huge Middle European block, increasing 'enormously the danger which would threaten the very existence of the British Empire if Germany should be able to recover any of her Colonies (except possibly those in West Africa), or if the Turk should retain his hold over Palestine'.[88] He pointed out that the numbers of people living in countries under German control would then increase from 70 to 170 million, thereby vastly increasing the human resources at their disposal. Furthermore, he argued that 'if East Africa should, by any chance, be restored to a Germany which, through Turkey, remains in control of Palestine, our position in Egypt and British East Africa would become one of the utmost difficulty and danger.'[89]

The subject was returned to in a further document presented just one month later on 14 June 1917, *Review of the Near Eastern Situation*, written by another Conservative MP, William Ormsby-Gore.[90] He expressed apprehension about the consequences of Germany gaining a foothold in the region, with its 'vast colonisable and undeveloped lands of Asia Minor, Syria, and Mesopotamia'. He feared that it would lead to 'the absorption of the Ottoman Empire into German Mittel-Europa'.[91] A development of such scope, he suggested, would result in Germany holding sway across the Near East and constitute a dire threat to British imperial interests, menacing the Suez Canal and its defences and bringing German forces to the shores of the Red Sea. Until now this had been averted because of the intervention of the Sharif of Mecca, but if that had not been the case then the Baghdad Railway, he concluded, '[would have been] a German arrow pointed directly at India'.[92]

On 15 July 1917, a few weeks after the Amery and Ormsby-Gore documents, 'E.R.B' and 'J.W.H.' produced the *Memorandum on German War Aims* for the War Cabinet. The paper examined German views on the possible consequences of the war and what alternatives there might be.[93] Their paper assessed the range of views being advanced by the major

political parties in Germany and attempted to gauge the support for each of them. The War Cabinet was advised that there were five main lines of thought about German strategy which included: a strategy to increase German sea power and make annexations to 'the West'; the consolidation of a 'Central European bloc of Allied Powers' reinforcing 'Mittel-Europa'; the strengthening of the Berlin-to-Bagdad axis based on the control of the Ottoman Empire; the adoption of an extensive colonisation policy to create an African empire; and lastly the acquisition of new land to the east through the annexation of Russian territory. The document assessed the likely success of the contending views winning German governmental support, and the possible consequences for British interests in Mesopotamia and Palestine of the proposed alternatives.

If the proposal, the authors argued, to expand German interests in East Africa was to be adopted and be successful, it would have implications for the fate of the Suez Canal. Such a development, opening it up to German shipping and thereby cutting off vital trade routes, would have grave consequences for Britain. The document quoted Hans Delbrück, 'one of the most moderate of the "Moderates," one of the most emphatic opponents of annexation in the West', a supporter of the German orientation towards Mittel-Europa and the Berlin-to-Bagdad options. He was reported as suggesting that 'if England loses the Canal, all the bands connecting its Empire are loosened' to the extent that even the 'Central Government in London might grow insecure'.[94] To Germany, the winning of the Suez Canal would have a dual advantage, allowing its fleet free access to the Indian Ocean whilst creating instability within Britain itself. In that case Germany would have a hold on 'England's neck'.[95]

However, by the time that the War Cabinet came to look at the document, events had already overtaken it. On Thursday 25 July the authors were forced to note that, on 19 July, the Reichstag had already resolved that Germany was 'not animated by lust of conquest'. Moreover the authors were obliged to report that the Reichstag had adopted the position that it 'stands for peace and understanding and for the lasting conciliation of nations. Annexations, political, economic, and financial oppressions are contradictory to such peace.'[96] The Reichstag resolution represented a decisive shift in Germany's ambitions and the authors now judged that the creation of a German Empire in Africa, a 'German India', had all but been

abandoned.[97] The Reichstag, it appeared, had concluded that British naval superiority could not be challenged.

As the war continued, the loss of life, the privations suffered at home and the growth of industrial discontent took their toll. The Russian Revolution, albeit from a distance, challenged the very premises of the war and suggested alternatives which resonated with masses of people both in Britain, across Europe and even further afield. Declarations of revolt and mass strikes by parties and organisations supportive of the Bolsheviks took place in Holland, Germany, Hungary and in a number of large cities across Europe.[98] Confronted by these phenomena, the imperial powers were obliged to chart a new course to achieve their ambitions. Colonial expansionism was politically discredited and progressively became a military and economic problem for the British.

At the beginning of the war, Tsarist Russia – a less potent imperial power moving away from its predominantly *pre-capitalist* agrarian economy towards a more industrialised *capitalist* one – was an established member of the Entente Powers. The Bolshevikled revolution of 1917 ended that union, changing the configuration of the war when it withdrew from the conflict and ending combat on the Eastern Front. However, its departure raised other political challenges in the international field. The Bolshevik government exposed the secret pre-war negotiations between the imperialists, especially relating to the lands of the former Ottoman Empire, laying bare their plans. At the same time they raised the standard of self-determination amongst the peoples of the nations which had hitherto been part of the Russian Empire. Trotsky published the Sykes–Picot agreement in *Izvestia* in late November 1917, which was then republished by the *Manchester Guardian* on 26 and 28 November.[99] The Russian Revolution constituted a further threat to the imperialists' goal of monopolising the world market. By championing the right of self-determination, the Bolsheviks presented a political challenge which disputed the right of Germany and Britain to seek to assert their complete dominance over raw materials and the world markets.

Ultimately the British considered the stance taken by the Bolshevik government as so threatening that by mid-1918, together with France, the USA, Italy and a host of other nations, they sent troops to fight alongside anti-Bolshevik forces in an attempt to overthrow the new government.

These forces were joined at Vladivostok by Japanese forces.[100] However, despite this decision the growing economic challenges facing Britain forced the government to rethink the strategy. In a House of Commons statement on 13 November 1919, on the subject of internal Russian opposition to the Bolshevik government, Prime Minister David Lloyd George stated that: 'The Government has repeatedly made it clear to the House of Commons that with the crushing financial burden already cast upon it by the Great War, it cannot contemplate the assumption of new obligations under this head.'[101] Despite the importance that he had attached to Russia, because he considered that 'a settlement of the Russian problem … [was] essential to the reconstruction of the world', the prime minister nevertheless felt unable to go beyond the very substantial commitment of around £100,000,000, 'in cash and kind', that had been sent as assistance to Russia.[102]

The inter-imperialist rivalry of World War I had drained the economic capacities of the country, and the loss of life had induced a deep war-weariness. Even though Russia's economy was less productive than that of Britain, the prime minister had to concede that there was nothing more that could be done to support their White Russian allies. Less than twelve months after the joint imperialist invasion of Bolshevik Russia the troops had to be withdrawn.

WAR, RELIGION AND RACISM

Since a number of countries of the empire had majority Muslim populations, concerns had been expressed in numerous papers presented to the War Cabinet about the possible impact on the 'Moslem world' of British war policies.

The potential for alienating Indian Muslims had long weighed on the minds of the British. Numerous Cabinet papers refer to political developments that might affect Muslim attitudes towards the empire. General Sir E.G. Barrow, military secretary of the India Office, submitting on 24 November 1915 a memorandum to the Cabinet entitled *The Military Situation in India and the Middle East*, discussed concerns about the volatility of the political situation in India.[103] Barrow emphasised the need to send 'white soldiers' to counter any thoughts that the British themselves were unable to supply sufficient military to handle any problems. The difficulties inside India could be managed, he argued, 'if they [the Indian

troops] remain loyal, and if the 17,000 Imperial and Nepalese troops also can be relied on, we shall be able to hold our own, but the "if" is fraught with such tremendous issues that I doubt if any Government dare take the risk'.[104]

Ormsby-Gore's War Cabinet paper in June 1917 raised a new question relating to what he perceived as the potential implications of German influence in the region on 'two great world forces … *viz*., Islam and Jewry'.[105] His unqualified use of the term 'world forces' suggests that he presumed that members of the Cabinet held a shared evaluation of the two groups. There was no analysis as to why or in what sense they might be called 'world forces', nor in what way they might be equated. Ormsby-Gore was preoccupied with the thought that the Muslim communities would be concerned about the fate of the Islamic holy places, and held the view that if Turkish forces retook Mecca then Britain's credibility in the eyes of the '100 million Moslem subjects of the King-Emperor in Asia and Africa' would be seriously damaged.[106] This sensitivity to the opinions of the Muslims was born of the fear that a British defeat would further stimulate the developing independence movement in India.[107] The German government themselves believed that pilgrims returning from Mecca might spread anti-British propaganda and thereby encourage insurrections in the wider Muslim world.[108]

If India became independent it would threaten the economic advantages the British had gained from the country as well as the whole structure of the empire. The Indian nationalist movement was partially split between Muslims and Hindus, but the Muslim community itself was additionally divided by 'sect, region, language, and socio-economic status'.[109] A development which prompted the Muslim community to become united around their religion might then encourage them to link with the non-Muslim nationalists. Such a development would lead to a challenge to the credibility of the British rulers and potentially undermine the structures of the empire in India. If the Ottoman forces and their allies could defeat the British then that might encourage all Indians to give even more support to the struggle for independence. It was a pragmatic politico-military consideration that lay behind Ormsby-Gore's apprehension about Muslim responses to the loss by the British of the holy places rather than a religious concern.

At the same time Ormsby-Gore, a friend of Chaim Weizmann, expressed anxiety about divisions within Jewry that might lead some Zionists to support Germany's aspirations. He identified the split between those he called the 'Ententophil Jew' and 'those who are consciously or unconsciously Pro-German' who were preoccupied, 'lest a Christian Power rule in Palestine'.[110] Ormsby-Gore voiced concern about the ambivalence of these two strands within the Jewish community and the equally equivocal stance of non-Jews within Germany who were quite capable of appropriating Zionist aspirations to their own imperialist agenda.[111] Despite describing Germany as 'the home of Anti-Semitism … the chief centre of Assimilation, and the chief enemy of growing Jewish nationalism', he acknowledged that, out of self-interest, those opinions could easily be put to one side.[112] Germany's reaction towards Zionism and the fate of Palestine was as pragmatic as that of the British.

Ormsby-Gore addressed the question as to what military measures should be taken to secure the region. He was anxious to advocate the 'separation of Syria and Palestine from the control of a Power dominated or controlled by Germany [as] the only security that can assure our position in Bagdad and along the Red Sea'.[113] In order to prevent the Ottomans holding on to Syria and Palestine and 'prevent[ing]Zionism being thrown into the arms of the King of Prussia … when the Germans are at this moment making a bid to capture Zionism', he argued that the British needed to draw a clear line of defence 'from Trebizond to the Gulf of Alexandretta', a line running from the Black Sea south-westwards to the Mediterranean Sea and roughly corresponding to the area of Anatolia.[114]

In Germany, in the latter part of the war, opinion became increasingly cynical about British support for Zionism. According to a report circulated to the Cabinet on 6 June 1918, a section of the press in Germany were of the opinion that the British government's concerns for the fate of the Jews and the future of Palestine hinged more on imperial self-interest than religious sensibilities. In an article published on 12 May 1918 in the *Berliner Tageblatt* and translated for the Cabinet, Georg Gothein, a member of the Reichstag, is quoted as expressing the view that the British 'are only concerned to make the Indian Ocean into an English lake, and so throw a bridge from Egypt to India over Palestine, Mesopotamia, Persia and Afghanistan. Palestine, as a so-called Jewish State, would be merely an

English colony.'[115] Gothein acknowledged that any putative state might be described as 'Jewish', but that its defining characteristic would be its colonial status. In the opinion of the journalist, the British regarded the establishment of a homeland for the Jews as the same as the creation of a Jewish state and no different from any other colonial enterprise. The view taken by German strategists was that the British regarded Palestine as a means to an end, a *mariage de convenance*, and a bridge to the furthest reaches of the empire rather than a land to be restored to a people because of a religious or biblical covenant.[116] Certainly some sections of German opinion still hoped that the Zionists might align themselves with the Central Powers.[117]

There was, however, yet another dimension to the relationship between the war and religion. In contrast to the pro-Zionist sentiments of some sections of German society, there were from the earliest days of the war others in the German government who had been taking steps to enlist the support of the Ottoman Empire in a *jihad* (struggle against the enemies of Islam), in order to get the backing of the whole of the Muslim world for the fight against the Entente Powers.[118] Helmuth von Moltke, chief of the general staff, gave orders on 5 August 1914 – 'one day after Britain declared war on Germany – that the German Foreign Office began recruiting spies and agents for the jihad'.[119] Religious allegiance was clearly not something that concerned German imperialism as much as the capacity of Islamic communities to add to the potency of the war effort.

The views quoted in the documents – both those of Amery and Ormsby-Gore on the one hand and those attributed to Delbrück and Gothein on the other – were of course partisan, the products of analyses conducted during wartime. Both Germany and Britain gave considerable thought to the role that Zionism might play to help them achieve their respective ambitions. However, they did not address in any detail considerations about what post-conflict developments in Palestine might be. The focus of the authors was on the general strategies of their respective countries and how each could achieve and sustain their empires.

Endorsement for Zionism was not the exclusive property of the British and nor was Zionism itself committed to any particular imperial power. In 1889 for example, whilst visiting Constantinople, Theodor Herzl won the backing of Kaiser Wilhelm II for Zionism who, in turn, afterwards sought to

persuade Sultan Abdul Hamid II to support the movement.[120] The centre of international Zionism was in Berlin and the German Zionist movement was entirely patriotic at the outbreak of war, stimulated in part by justifiable concern at the anti-Semitism evident in Russia.[121] German Zionists worked with the Foreign Ministry to establish a 'Committee for the Liberation of Russian Jewry' with the hope that Germany might occupy western Russia where most of the Jews lived, and impose a less anti-Semitic form of government.[122]

Even though in the eyes of some British commentators Zionism was allied with the German war effort, the notion of the creation of a Jewish homeland in Palestine had been a subject of discussion for some years if not decades in Britain. It gained considerable strength from the date of Allenby's entry into Jerusalem on 11 December 1917, when the aspirations of Zionism became a much more explicit part of the considerations of the British War Cabinet. The ambitions of Zionism to create a homeland for the Jews in Palestine readily connected with the aspirations of British imperialism in the region and the religious temperament of many of its leaders.[123]

Though perhaps to a lesser extent than in Britain, some Christians in Germany also expressed their support for the colonisation of Palestine by Jews. Georg Gothein, the author of an article in the newspaper *Berliner Tageblatt*, is quoted as reporting the formation of a society, composed mainly of Christians in Berlin, called *Pro-Palaestina*, which, although 'not Zionist in the popular sense' encouraged the colonisation of Palestine by Jews.[124]

General Edmund Allenby's defeat of the Ottoman army in the campaign raised more acutely the question of the post-war political settlement. On 14 August 1917, General A.J. Murray, general commanding-in-chief, presented to the War Cabinet a very detailed account of the operations of the Egypt Expeditionary Force from 1 March to 28 June 1917, outlining the progress of the campaign.[125] Accompanying this report and on behalf of Allenby, Lord Derby, the secretary of state for war, asked the War Cabinet in a very brief document entitled *British Policy in Palestine* to clarify government objectives. He insisted that Allenby be told and told soon, what the government's intentions were in respect of Palestine.[126] It was, in his opinion, a matter of some urgency because of the interest being shown in

Syria by both the French and Italian governments. Lord Derby's reference to Syria, at this point, is clearly intended to include Palestine.[127]

ANGLO-FRENCH NEGOTIATIONS AND SYKES–PICOT

In looking to advance their position in the Near East, the British were aware that they would face opposition.[128] The Ottoman Empire, France, Russia and Germany each had their own goals. The leaders of the Zionist movement, appreciating that a favourable outcome for any one of the combatants was not a foregone conclusion, solicited support from all the key figures in these countries, combining ideological single-mindedness with *realpolitik*. They believed that a British victory was the one most likely to achieve the establishment of a Jewish homeland, but they were aware of the need to explore alternatives if that was not the result.[129]

The British made considerable efforts to reach agreements and understandings with the two forces they considered key in the region in order to safeguard Britain's interests. In the first instance they set out to reach some form of accord with the French, who were looking to establish their hegemony in those parts of the region they regarded as traditionally under their suzerainty.[130] The second goal of the British was to reach some form of alliance with Arab forces seeking independence from the Ottoman Empire. If the Arab forces could be won over to an alliance against the Ottoman Empire this would strengthen British military capability in the area and place them in a stronger position to achieve their objectives.

Sir Mark Sykes, a Conservative Party MP seconded to the military service, led the negotiations for the British, whilst the French diplomat François Georges-Picot represented the French. There was an added urgency to the negotiations, which took place between November 1915 and March 1916, because a successful conclusion would obviate the need to divert additional British resources to the Near East away from an already overstretched Western Front. The intention of the Sykes–Picot negotiations was to prevent discord between the allies by agreeing defined territorial spheres of influence. In addition, the agreement spelt out their respective economic goals and focused on British and French access to ports in the region, the development of the railway services and custom tariff provisions.[131] In the midst of the war neither side had lost sight of their commercial interests and the opportunity to establish trade domination of

the region. The document encapsulated the imperialist priority of working towards economic hegemony in the region.

Sykes sought to ensure that Palestine fell within the area of Britain's designated responsibility.[132] A Palestine under British control would have many advantages, not least that of providing a base for troops who could be deployed to Egypt to thwart any hostile moves against the Suez Canal. The British were well aware of the possible difficulties that might arise if their new Arab allies were to see documents spelling out the roles that they and the French intended to play.[133] As Sir Henry McMahon explained in a letter written to the Right Honourable Sir Edward Grey, secretary of state for foreign affairs, on 25 April 1916, 'there is the possibility that, when the whole truth of the Anglo-French agreement (if one has or shall be concluded) emerges, we may be faced with the Arabs preferring the Turkish offers to our own'.[134]

Although there was no specific reference in the documents to the aspirations of Zionism to create a homeland for the Jews, McMahon warned in his letter that 'the premature divulgence of any arrangement with France might even result in active Arab hostility, at any rate towards our Ally'.[135] The Sykes–Picot agreement was officially endorsed on 16 May 1916, and outlined how the French and British spheres of control would be defined in the event of a favourable outcome to the war for the allies.[136] In a parallel move, '[n]otes defining the Russian share were exchanged in Petrograd on April 26 1916, between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (M. Sazonoff) and the French Ambassador (M. Paléologue), and in London a few weeks later between the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir Edward Grey) and the Russian Ambassador (Count Benckendorff)'.[137]

The War Cabinet discussed the strategic significance of Palestine for British ambitions on a number of occasions.[138] The Ottoman advance, with German assistance, across the Sinai Peninsular in 1915 had dispelled once and for all the notion that the desert could act as a buffer against forces approaching the Suez Canal.[139] The further from the canal the boundaries from which a threat to its security could be launched the better. The political and economic importance of Palestine had to be seen in the wider context of imperialist preoccupations.[140] This prioritisation of the Suez Canal in the

grand imperial scheme was the essential factor determining British attitudes towards it and ultimately towards Palestine.

HUSSEIN–MCMAHON CORRESPONDENCE AND THE ARAB REVOLT

In the Near East the imperialist conflagration played out in its own way. The Ottoman Empire, viewed by the British as a long-time bulwark against Russian influence in the region, had demonstrated its fragility as the older essentially *pre-capitalist* agricultural economy was confronted by the more expansionist ambitions of imperialism.[141] The British, taking advantage of the aspirations of the Arab peoples of the Near East to assert their independence from Constantinople, encouraged the Arab Revolt against their Central Power foe. Their commitment to establish states whose founding treaties would include an acceptance of military patronage and a privileged economic relationship with the British epitomised the essence of the neo-colonialist agenda, the predominantly colonialist and colonising programme of previous centuries being supplanted by a new form of dependency relationship.

Almost simultaneously with the gambit to reach agreement with the French through the Sykes–Picot exchanges, the British were trying to get an understanding with Sharif Hussein of Mecca. He had expressed a commitment to fight against the Ottoman Empire and a desire to cement a relationship with the British in order to establish an Arab state under British tutelage.[142] Between July 1915 and January 1916, Sharif Hussein corresponded with Sir Henry McMahon, the British high commissioner in Cairo, with the object of verifying that a complimentary set of interests existed between the British and himself. Hussein made it clear that in return for British support in his fight against the Ottoman forces, he would wish to create an Arab state that would be an ally to the British and provide them with a range of benefits.[143]

McMahon was anxious to gain Hussein's commitment to join the British in the struggle against the Ottoman Empire. At the same time he remained ambiguous about what obligations the British might have towards the creation of Arab nations, in particular in the area surrounding Palestine.[144] McMahon used the idea that the British were anxious to retain harmonious relations with the French in order to avoid any agreement on specific definitions of the boundaries of any future states.[145] A

memorandum written by the Arab Bureau for McMahon, and sent by him with a covering letter to Sir Edward Grey, the Conservative foreign secretary, on 19 April 1916, conveyed the nature of the thinking behind the process. In the words of the memorandum:

> realising that the present stage of operations in the Ottoman Empire is transitional, but daily declaring itself more and more in our favour, we have made every effort to avoid definite commitments for the future; and consequently the longer a final programme is postponed the stronger becomes our position as negotiators, and the more reasonable will the other two parties, both Turk and Arab, be likely to show themselves towards our view.[146]

He avoided any firm commitments whilst offering words of encouragement in areas which did not threaten British objectives. McMahon's correspondence concluded before the detail of the Sykes–Picot agreement was finalised but, from the British point of view, was undoubtedly an important contribution to the whole process. Any developing Arab challenge to the Ottoman Empire would be annexed by the British into their regional scheme, thus ensuring that it could not be co-opted by the French. In addition, the Sykes–Picot agreement ensured that if there were to be disputes between France and Britain they would be shelved until after the conclusion of the war with the Central Powers.[147]

Throughout 1916 the War Cabinet received reports on the 'Arab Revolt' and held discussions attended by senior military staff responsible for the conduct of the war such as Admiral Jellicoe, the First Sea Lord and Sir William Robertson, chief of the imperial general staff. Minutes of the meetings record that discussions took place throughout 1916 on the progress of the revolt and that there were concerns about its fortunes. There was particular anxiety about the potential negative consequences should the revolt suffer a setback. Austen Chamberlain, secretary of state for India, and Lord Curzon, leader of the House of Lords, on 9 December 1916 both voiced a concern that the War Cabinet 'cannot allow the Sharif to be overwhelmed. One small state after another that has willingly or unwillingly, espoused the cause of the Allies has been shattered; it is particularly important not to allow the downfall of the Sharif, as the effect on our prestige throughout the East would be disastrous.'[148]

Having secured the acquiescence of the French and created an alliance with Arab forces, the task for the British was to turn their attention to defeating the Ottoman Empire. Sir Archibald Murray was replaced as

Commander in Chief of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force at the end of June 1917. Field Marshall Edmund Allenby, who had been reassigned from the European military theatre to the Near East, moved his headquarters from Cairo to Rafah to be nearer to the front lines, and led the Egyptian Expeditionary Force against the Ottoman forces. Allenby inflicted a number of defeats on the Ottoman troops before entering Jerusalem on 11 December 1917.

In keeping with the intentions expressed in the McMahon–Hussein correspondence, Allenby ensured funding for the Arab forces who were carrying out their own operations against the Ottoman army. The Ottoman army, until the arrival of Allenby and his additional troops, had had some successes in defending the southern approaches to Palestine but it now had to contend with being attacked on a second front.[149] The Arab forces, led by Emir Faisal, the third son of Sharif Hussein, with T.E. Lawrence acting as the British military liaison officer, engaged in a series of actions capturing Aqaba and attacking the vulnerable Hijaz rail services.[151] Ten months later the Ottoman Empire had been defeated and the British military goals achieved. The next phase, the implementation of the Balfour Declaration, was to begin.

2

The Balfour Declaration, Self-Determination and Palestinian Opposition

THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE IN DECLINE

The government decision in late 1917 to support the creation of a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine was motivated by a self-interest which coalesced with the ambitions of the Zionist movement itself. The task was to integrate this project into the goal of sustaining the British Empire without appearing to replicate imperialist expansionism and colonisation. The British government was conscious of French hopes to bring parts of the Ottoman Empire under its hegemony, and consequently sought to avoid provoking a rupture with either its French allies or the anti-Ottoman Arab forces.

It was in the context of stimulated anti-imperialist movements and accelerated demands for self-determination in countries under imperial rule that the British government sought to advance their interests. In the midst of this maelstrom the interests of the British found congruence with the aspirations of Zionism. Zionist settlement provided a convenient surrogate, effectively implementing colonisation under the guise of national reconstruction. Zionism, hitherto a peripheral political movement within the Jewish community, became an important adjunct of British imperialist strategy in the Near East.

Whilst earlier governments had considered the preservation of the Ottoman Empire as key to protecting British strategic interests, its accelerating vulnerability raised serious doubts about its capacity to serve that purpose.[1] A number of existing and nascent nation-states wanted to assert their independence from the empire, and in some instances go further and annex parts of its territory.[2] These included countries like Italy and Greece alongside peoples such as the Bulgarians, Armenians, Kurds and Egyptians, some of whom, at varying times, tried to enlist the support of France and Russia.[3] For some the task would necessitate the military defeat and removal of Ottoman forces from their lands, whilst for others their ambitions would take the form of the occupying and colonising conquered territory.

The colonisation of former parts of the Ottoman Empire had been taking place for some years. Following the French occupation of Algeria in 1830, some 50,000 people from France settled there over the next seventeen years. Between 1870 and 1911 the colonial population of Algeria rose further, from 272,000 to 681,000.[4] The Italians followed a similar path in Tunisia, and by 1911 there were 143,000 European colonists in the country. Following the Italian conquest of Ottoman-held Libya in 1912, there was an influx of 150,000 immigrants which, coupled with the genocidal policies inflicted on the indigenous peoples, culminated in the colonists constituting roughly one-fifth of the total population. Egypt had around 250,000 foreign settlers who became an increasingly significant proportion of the population, especially in the cities. In Cairo the number of non-indigenous residents was 16 per cent whilst in Port Said it reached as high as 28 per cent.[5] These developments in the former Ottoman territories had established a pattern of conquest and colonisation across the area which set a precedent for the British.

The Ottoman Empire was under threat from both internal and external challenges. Given the fragility of the Ottoman Empire, the British feared that it might fall completely under the sway of Germany.[6] The British, recognising a potential Arab opposition to Ottoman rule, believed an alliance with such forces would strengthen their hand against Germany and might obviate the need to make compromises with the French over the subsequent division of conquered territories.[7] One further factor influenced them to turn their attentions to the Ottoman Empire, and that was the

military setbacks on the Western Front, especially at the Somme in 1916, which resulted in the British considering it expedient to switch focus to the Near East.[8]

In India the British defeated some heredity leaders whilst forming alliances with others who were to act as a comprador social layer in compliance with the imperial rulers. In the case of the Near East, whilst the British opted for alliances with some Arab rulers in parts of the region, they chose a different path in Palestine, viewing the Zionists' ambitions as an alternative option to the challenge of creating a base from which to oversee the Suez Canal. Throughout the debates of the Zionist congresses there had been a clear understanding that, to be successful, the creation of a Jewish state would require an act of colonisation under imperial patronage. This was understood equally by Balfour and by the Zionists. In his Memoir, *Orientations*, written many years later, Sir Ronald Storrs, the first British military governor of Jerusalem, described Zionist ambitions for Palestine as the creation of 'a little loyal Jewish Ulster in a sea of potentially hostile Arabism'.[9] By claiming that they were assisting the return of the Jews to their homeland, the British hoped to deflect any criticism of imperial expansionism, especially from President Woodrow Wilson.[10]

Kitchener had spelt out the importance of the region from the perspective of British interests in India and the adjacent area, but more than that, he had recognised that the Near East was crucial to defining the relationship between Britain and the other European powers, and between Britain and the peoples of the region.[11] He saw Mesopotamia as providing material benefits, from its agriculture and its oil fields, and he even posited the idea that it be colonised by 'the surplus population of India'.[12] He saw a Muslim colonial settler policy as an alternative to that of Anglicisation. He proposed that Muslims from India would be used to establish a colony around Basra which would then form one end of the vital rail link to the Mediterranean, thereby ensuring a base from which to supervise access to the Arabian or Persian Gulf. Kitchener's suggestions were not carried through in the form he proposed, but there is a clear parallel between the subsequent involvement of the British in Palestine and his original idea of seizing Alexandretta and securing a loyal Muslim colony in Mesopotamia. He wanted Britain to remain an 'Asiatic Power'. To those who accepted the

argument he advanced, Palestine was an alternative to his Alexandretta scheme.

BRITISH IMPERIALISM AND ZIONISM BEFORE THE BALFOUR DECLARATION

At the end of the nineteenth century, emerging from the Christian Restorationist religious tradition, Christian Zionist sympathies existed within sections of the British establishment.[13] Members of the Zionist Organisation, which was established in 1897 in Basel, had succeeded in establishing relations with some of these prominent figures and were, in turn, accepted as representing a major current of Jewish opinion.[14] In 1903 Lloyd George had participated in an attempt to draft an agreement between the Zionist Organisation and the government, which was headed by the Conservative prime minister, Arthur James Balfour. The intention had been to make an agreement to allocate land for the establishment of a Jewish homeland.[15]

Although nothing came of it at the time the matter continued to be discussed. On 11 April 1905, the Liberal MP, Mr Cathcart Wason, asked the secretary of state for the colonies in the House of Commons whether there had been a request from the Zionist Commission to conduct a 'punitive expedition against the Nandi' people in order to provide them land, in British East Africa (now Kenya). Mr Lyttelton, MP replied that there had been no request. The area that the Nandi lived in, the 'Rift Valley' was deemed to be 'suitable for the occupation of white men'.[16] The idea had received the backing of the 'Territorialists', or those who were prepared to accept any piece of land anywhere in order to establish a Jewish homeland. Despite having the support of Lord Rothschild, however, the defeat of the Territorialists in the Zionist movement ended this project.

There were sections of British public opinion hostile to Jewish immigration. The principal target of the restrictions put forward in the Aliens Act of 1905, giving powers to the home secretary to control immigration, were Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe. These anti-Jewish sentiments were on occasion presented as a concern for the plight of Jews amongst those who 'felt that something should be done for east European Jewry if they were to be barred from entering England'.[17]

Theodor Herzl, widely recognised as one of the most important founders of modern Zionism, advocated the creation of a Jewish homeland in Palestine which, to succeed, he knew required the support of an imperial sponsor. Following the First Zionist Congress in 1897, Herzl, travelling across Europe, contacted Kaiser Wilhelm II, the Ottoman Sultan, the Pope (1903) and King Victor Emmanuel III (1903). In Britain he met Joseph Chamberlain (1902), the colonial secretary in the government of Prime Minister Arthur Balfour, and Lord Cromer, consul-general of British-occupied Egypt.

Evidence of the lengths to which he was prepared to go to win the support of the leading imperial powers of the day was his effort in 1902 to gain the backing of Vyacheslav von Plehve, the anti-Semitic minister of the Interior in the Russian Tsarist government.[18] Herzl suggested to Plehve that it was in the interests of his government to back Jewish emigration since it might reduce Jewish cultural and political activity and 'defection to the socialist ranks'.[19] He took the view that in the light of the rivalry between the powers, seeking the support of all might, in the end, ensure the support of at least one.

The agreement which the Zionist Organisation and the British government had been working on aimed to establish a homeland for the Jewish people in any location that could be provided. Cyprus and Uganda were actively discussed.[20] Those prepared to accept any land to create a homeland for the Jews were called 'Territorialists', and as such were not unlike other persecuted religious groups who sought refuge abroad. Even though, at this time, they did not have support from the government for the creation of a Jewish homeland in Palestine, they had won a hearing from some of its leading members and they continued to gather support in the following years.

Amongst those who participated in the 1903 debate at the Zionist Congress in Basel were some like Chaim Weizmann, who supported the case for Palestine as the only place in which the Jewish homeland might be established. In 1904 Weizmann moved to Manchester, where he took a post at the university and began promoting the call for a Jewish homeland. The discussion of this aspiration and support for it was not restricted to Jewish members of the local community, as non-Jewish figures such as Winston Churchill, then a local MP, expressed his backing for the Zionist cause.[21]

Theodor Herzl died in 1904. Support for the scheme to create a Jewish homeland outside of Palestine was defeated at the Seventh Congress of the Zionist Organisation in Basel in July 1905.[22] Whilst Weizmann lobbied key political figures in the British establishment, his success was in large part a consequence of their political and religious predisposition. In 1906 Weizmann met Arthur Balfour, then the leader of the opposition following his defeat as prime minister. In the following years he continued his lobbying activities. In early 1914 he met Sir Herbert Samuel, the Liberal MP for Cleveland, who was to become home secretary in Asquith's government. Weizmann showed an appreciation for British imperial sensibilities by explaining the advantages that a Jewish homeland in Palestine would have for Britain's interests in the Near East. In 1914 he wrote to C.P. Scott, the editor of the *Manchester Guardian*, that should Palestine fall within London's sphere of interest and 'should Britain encourage a Jewish settlement there … we could have in twenty to thirty years a million Jews there, perhaps more; they would develop the country, bring back civilisation to it, and form a very effective guard for the Suez Canal'.[23]

In November the same year, through his connections with Scott, he met the then chancellor of the exchequer, David Lloyd George, together with Sir Herbert Samuel.[24] Samuel's commitment to the Zionist cause was demonstrated by his submission to the Cabinet in January 1915 of a memorandum on *The Future of Palestine*, outlining a proposal for a Jewish homeland in Palestine.[25] 'I am assured,' he wrote, 'that the solution of the problem of Palestine which would be much the most welcome to the leaders and supporters of the Zionist movement throughout the world would be the annexation of the country to the British Empire.'[26] Samuel considered Weizmann's demands too modest.[27] Weizmann's task was not so much persuading these figures to support the Zionists' objectives but rather encouraging them to consider how those goals might be achieved. These discussions, about the creation of a homeland for the Jews in Palestine, now took place within the highest echelons of the British ruling class and at the highest parliamentary level.

The Supporters

As the war continued the links between highly placed government officials and the leadership of Zionism strengthened. The ending of the Asquith government in December 1916 and its replacement by the Lloyd George coalition saw three strong supporters of Zionism enter the Cabinet: the new prime minister himself, the foreign secretary, Arthur Balfour, and Lord Milner. Discussions took place on 7 February 1917 between Sir Mark Sykes, 'advisor to the Foreign Office on Middle Eastern affairs, … Lord Rothschild, Chaim Weizmann president of the English Zionist Federation, and other Zionist leaders, in order to arrive at some understanding on the future of Palestine'.[28] The Cabinet had further discussions in April on a report by Ormsby-Gore on 'Zionism and the suggested Jewish Battalions for Egyptian Expeditionary Force'. This reflected the growing support amongst Zionists for a 'British Palestine or a Palestine under the United States'.[29]

Between July 1917 and October 1917, Balfour and Lord Rothschild exchanged correspondence about the construction of a statement expressing the British government's stance on the creation of a homeland for the Jews in Palestine. The statement went through a number of drafts.[30] The text developed into its final version as the result of a process of private exchanges between Balfour and Rothschild. The text attempted to steer a course that would indicate support for the Zionist objective of creating a homeland for the Jews in Palestine, whilst seeking to avoid either antagonising opponents of the Zionist Federation's proposals in Britain or divulging any information about the proposal to the people of Palestine itself. As with their handling of the Irish prisoners question in 1916, those on the government side responsible for putting the statement together were influenced both by domestic and international considerations.[31]

Balfour faced opposition within his Cabinet and Rothschild faced opposition in the Jewish community, including within the Board of Deputies of British Jews.[32] Rothschild wrote to Balfour on 18 July 1917 from his London home that, 'our opponents have commenced their campaign by a most reprehensible manoeuvre, namely to excite a disturbance by the cry of British Jews versus Foreign Jews, they commenced this last Sunday when at the Board of Deputies they challenged

the new elected officers as to whether they were all of English birth (myself among them)'.[33]

Rothschild's draft clearly expected the government to discuss directly with the Zionist Organisation the means to create 'the National Home of the Jewish people'.[34] For his part Balfour amended Rothschild's imperative that the government 'will discuss … with the Zionist Organisation', to the more equivocal phrasing that the government 'will be ready to consider any suggestions on the subject which the Zionist Organisation may desire to lay before them'.[35] The number of drafts the document went through is testimony to the fact that all those contributing, and especially those on the government side, were striving to avoid formulations which were too specific and might provoke wider opposition. The ambiguities of the document were deliberate.

What is significant in the first three known drafts is what they chose to include and what they omitted.[36] The titles given to these drafts by Charles D. Smith in *Palestine and the Arab–Israeli Conflict* – the 'Zionist Draft, July 1917';[37] the 'Balfour Draft, August 1917';[38] and the 'Milner Draft, August 1917'[39] – indicate the initiating authors. The 'Zionist Draft' is the title given to Rothschild's letter to Balfour which began the formal process of seeking to establish a government statement. His response has been named the 'Balfour Draft', and the 'Milner Draft' was the version by Lord Milner, a member of the War Cabinet.[40] What is common to these texts is the status given to the Zionist Organisation as the arbiter of the 'methods and means' to achieve the creation of the Jewish homeland.[41] The 'Zionist Draft' in July 1917 asserted the 'principle that Palestine should be reconstituted as the National Home of the Jewish people'.[42] This initial text was unambiguous in its goal, proposing that 'His Majesty's Government will use its best endeavours to secure the achievement of this objective.'[43] Under the influence of Balfour and the government advisors, subsequent drafts dropped the assertion that the creation of a 'National Home for the Jewish people' was a principle in favour of the more emollient formula that the government 'views with favour the establishment of a home for the Jewish people in Palestine'.[44]

These changes represented the drive to reconcile conflicting views within the Cabinet where Edwin Montagu, secretary of state for India, had

pressed hard to block the declaration or at least to amend the text further.[45] It was generally appreciated that the German government, were they to get hold of any statement which explicitly proposed the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine, would undoubtedly have used it to their own advantage. They would have worked in conjunction with Constantinople to secure the support of the Ottoman Arab provinces and especially Greater Syria against the British in the war.[46] If Britain's Arab allies had access to the declaration it would lead some to revoke their alliance with London and turn back towards the Ottoman Empire. It was little wonder that the British delayed the release of the text in Palestine.

The 'draft declaration on Zionism', as it was described by M.P.A. Hankey, secretary to the Cabinet, was 'submitted to nine – or, including Mr E.S. Montagu, ten – representative Jewish leaders'. In his response to the draft, Herbert Samuel, MP drew attention to the dangers of not proceeding with the conquest of Palestine:

> If the Turks are left ostensibly in control of Palestine, the country is likely to fall, in course of time, under German influence. If Germany, or any other continental Power, is dominant there, Egypt would be exposed to constant menace. The best safeguard would be the establishment of a large Jewish population, preferably under British protection.[47]

Samuel was repeating the argument he had presented in his earlier Cabinet paper of January 1915.[48] The reference to Egypt was an explicit link to the Suez Canal with its significance for the future of the empire as a whole, and the argument was infused with the imperialist agenda tying together the fate of the empire and Palestine.

Balfour sought the views of leading figures within the British Jewish community. This pro-empire line was echoed by Sir Stuart Samuel, chairman of the Jewish Board of Deputies, who worried about the growing influence of German and Austrian Jews in Palestine. He raised the question as to whether they should in fact be allowed to remain in Palestine 'or if expelled … be allowed to return as Zionists?' In part answering his own question he proposed that they 'should be made ineligible for 20 years'.[49] His sentiments were echoed in the comments of another contributor to the exchanges, Mr C.G. Montefiore.[50] Imperial considerations ran through the debate, with those supporting the establishment of a homeland for the Jews

couching their arguments in terms that would resonate with the imperialist agenda of the day.

The Opponents

There was not, however, unanimity within the Jewish community. Those Jewish leaders who opposed the government's endorsement of the Zionist Organisation's policy also argued from a position of support for the British Empire. Sir Philip Magnus, MP, a Liberal Unionist who joined the Conservative Party in 1912, worried about the fate of Jews in Palestine should the 'other Palestinian communities' become aware of the intention to make the land a homeland for the Jews. Perhaps more radically than other Jewish opponents of the Zionists, he could not agree 'that the Jews regard themselves as a nation'.[51]

Mr C.G. Montefiore, president of the Anglo-Jewish Association, expressed similar criticisms of the idea that the Jews constituted a nation. He rejected Herzl's assertions that 'anti-Semitism was eternal, and that it was hopeless to expect its removal', viewing such remarks as a 'libel' upon both Jews and human nature. Montefiore analysed the debates in Russia and argued that the majority of Jews in Russia were in favour of autonomy inside Russia itself and not for 'exile *from* Russia'.[52] He was confident about the positive resolution of anti-Semitism there and feared that the desire for a national home would in fact delay, if not stop altogether, the developing emancipatory trends.

These views were shared by Mr L.L. Cohen, chairman of the Jewish Board of Guardians, who thought that the Jews were not a nation and support for such ideas would strengthen the hands of those who were anti-Semitic.[53] Cohen pointed out that, given the number of Jews in Europe, a Jewish homeland in Palestine would only be able to take a small fraction of that number and therefore would not resolve the problem of anti-Semitism.

The most formidable Jewish opponent of the declaration was the newly appointed secretary of state for India, Edwin Samuel Montagu, who fought an ongoing battle against the Zionist proposals. He placed the primacy of the empire above all else and viewed India as a vital part of it. In his view, asserting the notion of the 'principle' of a 'National Home' would aid the legitimation of the anti-Semitism already present in many countries of Eastern Europe where pogroms had taken place over a number of

decades.[54] On 14 September 1917 he wrote underlining that the leadership of the Zionist movement came from outside England and that, 'in conformity with the foreign origin of Zionism as a whole, Jews of foreign birth have played a very large part in the Zionist movement in England'.[55] Montagu believed that 'Anti-Zionism is a belief held by at least half the Jews of this country'.[56] He felt that there was no justification for accommodating Zionist ambitions and that the view put forward in Cabinet, 'to help the Allied cause in America', was not justifiable.[57]

On 9 October 1917 Montagu wrote: 'I am sorry to bother the Cabinet with another Paper on this subject but I have obtained some more information which I would like to lay before them.'[58] He remained opposed to the Zionists' proposals, drawing this time on evidence provided by Miss Gertrude Lowthian Bell, who was 'acting as Assistant Political Officer in Baghdad'.[59] Bell, who had spent a considerable amount of time travelling in the Near East and was a respected commentator on the region, had a very definite view about the situation on the ground:

> Jewish immigration [to Palestine] has been artificially fostered by doles and subventions from millionaire co-religionists in Europe; the new colonies have now taken root and are more or less self-supporting. The pious hope that an independent Jewish state may some day be established in Palestine no doubt exists, though it may be questioned whether among local Jews there is any acute desire to see it realized, except as a means of escape from Turkish oppression; it is perhaps more lively in the breasts of those who live far from the rocky Palestinian hills and have no intention of changing their domicile.[60]

Montagu, like Bell, considered the call for a Jewish state as the demand of an unrepresentative minority, and not something coming from those prominent Jews he felt the government should listen to. Whilst he professed admiration for Weizmann, he nevertheless regarded him as 'near to being a religious fanatic'.[61] He thought Palestine was not large enough for additional numbers of Jews and feared it would require the dispossession of the 'existing population'. He asked, 'Is it worthwhile jeopardising the position of all Jews who remain in other countries for the insignificant fraction of the Jewish population that can conceivably find a home in Palestine?'[62]

He was suspicious too about the real intentions of the French government and about the true motives behind some of the non-Jewish

support that was being garnered by the Zionists. He reminded the Cabinet that the French were already enthusiasts for the Zionist cause and had approached the British government with a proposal to establish a Jewish 'nation in El Hasa in Arabia' which, Montagu pointed out, the British had already promised to Bin Saud and his followers.[63] To his mind, 'the French are anxious to establish Jews anywhere if only to have an excuse for getting rid of them, or large numbers of them'.[64] The suggestion to create a Jewish state in El Hasa owing allegiance to Paris, he maintained, would jeopardise any British hopes for a land bridge between the Mediterranean Sea and India because it would be under French tutelage. As the secretary of state for India he viewed this as an important threat to the empire.

Montagu was not the only senior political figure in the government to question the proposal to adopt a policy endorsing the aspirations of the Zionists. On 12 May 1917, Lord Curzon, the then leader of the House of Lords, submitted a memorandum to the Cabinet entitled *Policy in view of Russian Developments*. In the paper he took the entirely pragmatic view that the capture of Palestine and Syria was essential to prevent a 'Teutonised Turkey, left in possession of Asia Minor … and of Syria and Palestine … [becoming] a perpetual menace to Egypt'.[65] His attitude towards the region was premised on essentially military criteria, and his views hadn't changed when Balfour initiated the discussion on the creation of a national homeland for the Jewish people. On 26 October, reflecting on the debate around the Zionists' proposals, he submitted a paper to the Cabinet entitled *The Future of Palestine*, in which he posed two questions:

> (a) What is the meaning of the phrase 'a national Home for the Jewish Race in Palestine', and what is the nature of the obligation we shall assume if we accept this as a principle of British policy?
>
> (b) If such a policy be pursued what are the chances of its successful realisation?[66]

The paper analysed the differing conceptions as to what constituted 'a National Home', pointing out the divergent interpretations as to its meaning even amongst those who advocated support for the Zionist cause. In his eyes it was an error to adopt a cause whose own champions were unsure as to what it meant. He was prepared to advocate the establishment of a regime overseen by 'some form of European administration' to protect the rights of the Jewish community but opposed to the establishment of a state.

He regarded the aspiration of the Zionists as 'romantic and idealistic', an impractical proposition and therefore one which should not be endorsed by the British government. The Cabinet, however, was not swayed by his well-reasoned critique.

THE ADOPTION OF THE BALFOUR DECLARATION

The final draft of the declaration agreed by the Cabinet on 31 October, perhaps modified as a consequence of Montagu's intervention, affirmed that 'nothing shall be done which may prejudice … the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country' as a result of the creation of a Jewish homeland. The clause was a clear attempt to counter the argument that a homeland for the Jews would encourage anti-Semitic sentiments or might legitimise pressure being put on Jewish citizens across Europe to emigrate.[67] The inclusion of the reference to the 'civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine' was a clear attempt to assuage Curzon. Balfour's letter to Rothschild navigated between the Scylla and Charybdis of the two sides. Its ambiguity was a deliberate attempt to satisfy the Zionist lobby whilst avoiding a formulation which would alienate Jewish anti-Zionists in Britain and anti-Ottoman Arab allies. To the authors and those to whom it was addressed, the Balfour Declaration dated 2 November 1917 had the status of a formal treaty with all that that implied:

> His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.[68]

Whilst the inhabitants of Palestine were ignored, the War Cabinet did consult others on the text of the Balfour Declaration. Confidentially, and before publication, they sent copies to President Wilson, the 'leaders of the Zionist Movement' and persons in 'Anglo-Jewry opposed to Zionism' to solicit their views.[69] As on the issue of Irish prisoners, and for similar reasons, the British were sensitive to the reaction of the United States administration to any steps towards the establishment of a national home for the Jewish people. The Cabinet were anxious not to alienate the influential pro-Zionist opinion in the USA lest it adversely affect the financial and material support provided by Wilson for the war effort.[70]

In the years that followed, British politicians continuously used the document as the reference point in determining policies for Palestine and considered its interpretation their exclusive prerogative.

ZIONISM, COLONISATION AND COLONIALISM

Having inflicted a major defeat on the Ottoman forces in the southern part of Palestine in October and early November, General Allenby officially entered Jerusalem on 11 December 1917. The British established the Occupied Enemy Territories Administration (South), which governed the conquered parts of Palestine until October 1918 when its responsibilities were extended to the whole of the country. Allenby ran Palestine through military rule, issuing statements that the places holy to Islam, Judaism and Christianity would be protected and instructed everyone to go about their lawful business. The administration had two major objectives: 'the preservation of the *status quo*, and the prohibition of any agreement for transfer of immovable property until the land registers were established'.[71]

Shortly afterwards, on 18 February 1918, Balfour announced to the House of Commons that the government had agreed 'to the request of the London Zionist Central Organisation to permit a Zionist Commission to proceed to Palestine at an early date'.[72] A telegram was sent from London to the military in Palestine informing the local administration that the Zionist Commission was about to arrive 'to act as liaison between the Jews and the Military Administration, and to "control" the Jewish population'. Ronald Storrs was shocked and subsequently commented, 'we could hardly believe our eyes, and even wondered whether it might not be possible for the mission to be postponed until the status of the Administration should be more clearly defined'.[73] Weizmann left for Palestine in April 1918 to establish the Commission with full British government approval.[74] Discussion hardly arose in the Cabinet in 1917 about what a homeland for the Jews might look like or how it might be created. Despite their commitment to the idea, Lloyd George and other leading political figures had no blueprint for its creation.[75] The wording of the Balfour Declaration was deliberately ambiguous to obscure its true intent or mislead those on whose lands the homeland was to be established, but it also revealed that the protagonists themselves were uncertain about how it might be achieved and what it might mean.

The symbiotic relationship between Zionism and British imperial interests was a central theme for many of the politicians who espoused the Zionist cause. Churchill expressed the view in early 1920 that:

> if, as it may well happen, there should be created in our lifetime by the banks of the Jordan a Jewish state under the protection of the British Crown, which might comprise three or four million of Jews, an event would have occurred in the history of the world which would, from every point of view, be beneficial, and would be especially in harmony with the truest interests of the British Empire.[76]

Like many more of his fellow War Cabinet members, including the Unionist Edward Carson and the South African Jan Smuts, Churchill appreciated the role colonists might play. Churchill's consistent espousal of the Zionist cause was the obverse of his promotion of the 'truest interests of the British Empire'.

Non-religious hierarchised notions of civilisation and secularised interpretations of religious beliefs were shaped into an imperialist discourse to validate political practice. The Balfour Declaration constituted a unique manifestation of this fusion. The Zionist project for the creation of a homeland for the Jews fused with the British government's desire to have a land base near the Suez Canal in order to protect the route through which it communicated with much of its empire. Zionism was a useful and timely adjunct to British imperialism's functioning.

PALESTINE AND SELF-DETERMINATION

The Palestinian aspiration for self-determination reflected developments which had taken place in the Ottoman Empire and in the emergence of anti-imperialist struggles elsewhere in the world. The 1857 'uprising' in India constituted one example of the anti-colonialist and anti-imperialist nationalist movements that were emerging. This process accelerated in the early part of the twentieth century with intensifying opposition to imperialist conquest, occupation and colonisation. Hitherto subaltern peoples sought to repudiate the inferior status imposed on them. The debate around self-determination developed as a counterpoint to that of the imperialist hegemony of Western European countries in particular.

Allenby, following his entry into Jerusalem, had issued a proclamation that, in the East, Great Britain sought 'the complete and final liberation of all peoples formerly oppressed by the Turks and the establishment of

national governments and administrations in those countries deriving authority from the initiative and free will of those people themselves'.[77] The trope of imperialism as liberator has been oft-repeated, though the tone of the second part of his statement, quite unintentionally, had similarities to the unequivocal declaration of the Bolshevik government in Russia.

On 3 January 1918, prompted by the negotiations taking place between the Central Powers and the new Soviet Republic, the War Cabinet discussed its 'War Aims'. Soviet Russia's unilateral withdrawal from the war reverberated throughout Europe.[78] The British government were keen to keep Russia engaged if only to occupy one or more of the Central Powers in continued fighting and to prevent Russian arms falling into enemy hands. A telegram from the British military attaché in Petrograd, however, made the assessment that 'Trotzki [*sic*] and his friends had so ruined the Russian army that if he does break off negotiations the enemy will advance a few kilometres and capture his guns.'[79] Although the USA had formally declared war against Germany, they could not compensate for the withdrawal of Russian troops because their soldiers were not prepared, were not yet available in comparable numbers and could not be deployed to the same battlefronts. Even after more than twelve months following the USA's entry into the war, considerable doubts were expressed at the battle-readiness of their forces. In a discussion that took place on 19 October 1918, on 'The Conditions of an Armistice with Germany', Field Marshall Haig described the 'American Army' as 'disorganised, ill-equipped and ill-trained', and that it would be 'at least a year before it becomes a serious fighting force'.[80]

The 'War Aims' statement was designed to make clear that the British objective was to conquer and appropriate all lands belonging to the Central Powers and no more. The Cabinet's endorsement of the 'principle of self-determination' was an attempt to convey this and defuse the growing war-weariness within Britain. In Europe the essence of Cabinet terms for ending the war amounted to a return to the *status quo ante* whilst demanding compensation for those countries invaded by the Central Powers. Lloyd George, keen to lessen any opposition to the continuation of hostilities, presented the 'War Aims' statement to the 'Trades Union Conference'. This initiative met with the approval of the Labour member of the Cabinet, Mr Barnes, who 'attached great importance to the psychological effect which

would be produced at home by the issue of a full reasoned statement of our war aims'.[81] Lloyd George duly delivered his speech to the meeting in Caxton Hall, London, on 5 January 1918.[82]

The prime minister's position on the fate of the colonial possessions of Germany and the Ottoman Empire, which he presented to the meeting of trade union representatives, was summed up in the War Cabinet minutes of 3 January 1918 in the following way:

> He thought that the War Cabinet were in general agreement that our proper course would be to express our willingness to accept the application of the principle of self-determination to the captured German colonies. Precisely how the principle was to be applied need not now be discussed, but there were chiefs and heads of tribes who could be consulted. The same principle was to be applied in the case of Mesopotamia – which was occupied by Arabs and not by Turks – and in the case of Palestine, which had a very mixed population.[83]

The acceptance of the 'application of a principle' did not constitute a commitment to put it into practice. Further discussions would be required before that happened, and in any event the British would remain the arbiter of its implementation following consultations with various 'chiefs and heads of tribes'.[84] The imperial power would only implement such a step once it had satisfied itself that the potential candidates for self-determination could guarantee the new state's continued fidelity to British interests.

The War Cabinet minutes offer no explanation or elaboration of the term 'mixed population' in respect of Palestine, nor why it was necessary to distinguish it from other countries of the Ottoman Empire. Notwithstanding the distinction made between Palestine and other regions, the statement suggested that the principle of self-determination applied to Palestine alongside other occupied Arab lands. This might have been interpreted as a repudiation of the Balfour Declaration, but to remove any ambiguity the minutes were duly amended the following day to make clear 'that the passage dealing with the principle of self-determination of races [*sic*] should be modified so as to apply, not to all races indiscriminately, but merely to the settlement of the New Europe'.[85] Palestine was not to be included amongst those deemed eligible for independence.

Allenby's words in December 1917 could be read as a straightforward confirmation that the principle of self-determination applied to the whole of the region under his military control and, since he was speaking in

Jerusalem, that included the people of Palestine. He did not differentiate between Palestine and the other countries under Ottoman control. Allenby's promissory words were similar to those used later by President Woodrow Wilson, who in a speech to Congress on 8 January 1918 put forward his 'Fourteen Points', to which the subsequent peace negotiations in Paris would refer.[86]

WOODROW WILSON AND SELF-DETERMINATION

Wilson was something of a contradictory character who, whilst appearing relatively liberal on some issues, was in reality a colonialist holding explicitly racist views about African Americans.[87] He had supported the terms of the Treaty of Paris in 1898 which, following its victories over Spain, endorsed the USA as a colonial power in Puerto Rico, Guam and the Philippines.[88] An admirer of British colonial rule, he thought that the peoples of these newly colonised lands would only be able to achieve independence after a period of oversight by the imperial power.[89]

Wilson's speech to the US Congress stating his aims for the war was made on 8 January 1918, a few days after Lloyd George's 'War Aims' statement.[90] He was undoubtedly influenced by the growing debate on imperialism and colonialism which had sharpened during the course of the war. However, it was the positions adopted in Russia which were a more challenging threat to imperialism. The political statements of the Bolsheviks and the 'decree on peace' which had been adopted and published by the All-Russian Congress of Soviets on 28 October 1917 (O.S.) constituted the polar opposite of everything that the imperial powers stood for, and resonated across the globe.[91] The Bolshevik government's call for a peace without annexation or indemnities, and its declared intention to publish all secret treaties and negotiations, jolted the imperialist powers into responding. In his 'Fourteen Points', Wilson advanced the proposition that 'the Turkish portions of the present Ottoman Empire should be assured a secure sovereignty, but the other nationalities which are now under Turkish rule should be assured an undoubted security of life and an absolutely unmolested opportunity of autonomous development'.[92]

Despite the frequent citing of President Wilson as the author of this debate, this was a qualified accommodation to the realities of a situation that had left the USA in danger of marginalisation. There is no evidence

from the Paris Peace Conference and its associated processes that Wilson significantly challenged Anglo-French priorities and conceptions of how the conquered lands might be allocated. If that challenge came from anywhere it was from the infant 1917 Russian government, which espoused support for self-determination and exposed the machinations of the British and the French in respect of the Sykes–Picot negotiations.[93]

Wilson's position was more ambiguous than has often been claimed. As chair of the League of Nations Commission addressing questions on self-determination, Wilson rejected the Chinese demand for the restoration of the province of Shandong to their authority. He agreed that it should be ceded to Japan in line with a secret Anglo-French agreement, with the small caveat of a verbal commitment that it should at some time in the future be returned to the Chinese.[94] The outcome of the Shandong question, like the future of Greater Syria, was a matter that had been the subject of secret agreements between the imperial allies without any reference to the indigenous peoples. The apparent support by Wilson for the rights of peoples to assert their sovereignty was a ploy to ingratiate the USA with newly emergent nations aspiring to independence. This was the expansion of the USA's neo-colonialist strategy.

The Bolshevik government, now in control of the Tsarist Empire, was the first to apply the concept of self-determination in practice and to advocate its applicability to all nations without preconditions. The Sykes–Picot agreement was published in *Izvestia* and *Pravda* on 23 November 1917, and subsequently in the *Manchester Guardian* on 26 November 1917.[95] Moreover, their revelations of the secret Anglo-French Sykes–Picot negotiations challenged the sincerity of those two countries' support for self-determination. The British implementation of the concept of self-determination was adapted to their own priorities and their own interests.

DECLARATION TO THE SEVEN AND THE ANGLO-FRENCH DECLARATION

Leading figures in the Arab world began to ask questions about the real intentions of the British towards the future of the Near East and in particular towards Palestine. In Cairo, on 16 June 1918, under growing pressure from a variety of sources, the British issued a statement at a meeting with seven influential Arabs which became known as the 'Declaration to the Seven'. It was drafted to reassure those concerned about the ambiguity of Britain's

intentions. The declaration specifically drew attention to Allenby's Jerusalem statement and to one made by General Sir Stanley Maude on the occasion of the fall of Baghdad on 19 March 1917.[96]

The 'Declaration to the Seven' discussed four categories of territory, the fourth of which were those territories 'liberated from Turkish rule by the action of the Allied armies'. Palestine and Mesopotamia came within this category and the document spelt out the British government's position on the future of these two regions. The declaration affirmed that, 'the policy of His Majesty's Government towards the inhabitants of those regions, … is that the future government of those territories should be based upon the principle of the consent of the governed'.[97] The declaration echoed the formula used in Lloyd George's 'War Aims' speech and was designed to reassure its recipients that the British endorsed the concept of self-determination.[98] From an Arab perspective the gaining of the right to self-determination in the manner implied by Allenby appeared to be a clear pledge that they would receive their liberty as a quid pro quo for their alliance with the British against Germany's partner, the Ottoman Empire.

A few months later the British military commands in Palestine, Syria and Mesopotamia, in conjunction with the French, felt compelled to issue a further statement seeking to clarify their political position. Though brief, the Anglo-French Declaration published on 7 November 1918 reiterated that the establishment of 'national governments and administrations … shall derive their authority from the free exercise of the initiative and choice of the indigenous populations'.[99] The document, an official communiqué, was distributed to the press in Palestine, Syria and Mesopotamia and posted in towns and villages, stating that 'France and Great Britain agree to further and assist in the setting up of indigenous governments and administrations in Syria and Mesopotamia which have already been liberated by the Allies, as well as in those territories which they are endeavouring to liberate, and to recognise them as soon as they are actually set up.'[100]

The declaration asserted that the role of the French and the British was to offer 'support' and 'help' for the peoples of those countries in a process which would culminate in self-determination. In the minds of those receiving both statements, it would appear that the imperial powers were giving an undertaking that the future of the countries of the region would be a matter for their determination and not that of the allies. It might

reasonably be thought that whatever had been said in London at the end of 1917, in the form of the Balfour Declaration, was now superseded by statements issued seven months later in Cairo and nearly a year later in Palestine, Syria and Mesopotamia. In London the Cabinet was already discussing the establishment of colonial rule in Mesopotamia.[101] Whatever the intentions of the British and the French there could be no doubt of the effect that their public statements would have on the Arab leadership and amongst the wider population. It must have appeared as though a consensus was emerging amongst the great powers that self-determination was going to be respected as a universal principle. However, this did not mean that the peoples of the region were to attain sovereignty. Nor did it mean that the imperialist rivalry which had provoked the war would conclude it to the benefit of those whose lands were coveted for their raw materials and potential markets.

PARIS PEACE CONFERENCE AND THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

The Mandate System

From October 1918 the British extended the rule of the Occupied Enemy Territory Administration to the whole of Palestine. Initially the French saw the advance on Syria and the taking of Damascus by their erstwhile partner as a repudiation of the Sykes–Picot agreement. The British and French prime ministers, David Lloyd George and Georges Clemenceau, met in December 1918 to resolve these issues before the peace negotiations began. On the eve of the Paris Peace Conference Lloyd George agreed a compromise, for essentially domestic reasons, to give the French a 'free-hand' in Syria and Lebanon once they had the necessary forces and *matériel* to achieve their goals successfully, thereby removing one major problem hanging over Anglo-French relations.[102] For their part the British were acting out of self-interest, placating the French in order to win the latter's acquiescence to the takeover of Palestine.[103]

The Paris Conference, which began on 18 January 1919, contained echoes of the 1884 Berlin Conference convened to reach an agreement to avoid competition and conflict between the imperialist powers over the division of Africa. The British and the French viewed the Paris Conference as an opportunity to give international legitimacy to their ambitions for hegemony in the Near East, and the importance of the Conference was

underlined by the presence of major political figures of the Entente Powers, including the British Prime Minister David Lloyd George, the French Prime Minister Georges Clemenceau, the US President Woodrow Wilson and Italian Prime Minister Vittorio Emanuele Orlando. The main business of the Conference resulted in a series of treaties, the first of which, the Treaty of Versailles, was concerned with Germany.

Lloyd George and Clemenceau had agreed their approach to the Conference based on the Sykes–Picot agreement and specifically the allocation of control over Mesopotamia, Syria and Palestine.[104] Five months later, on 28 June 1919, the Mandate system was established by the adoption of the Covenant of the League of Nations. This created three sets of Mandate listed as Class A, B and C. These corresponded to categories which the conquered countries were assigned to, based on the decisions by the imperial powers. Category A was composed of those countries deemed most ready to become independent sovereign states. Article 22 of the Covenant stated that the Mandates were held on behalf of the League of Nations by 'advanced nations' as a 'sacred trust of civilisation' in order to give 'practical effect' to the 'development of such peoples' who 'are not yet able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world'. This formula was meant to differentiate between the Mandate system and traditional colonial rule, though subsequent practices were hardly distinguishable from colonialism. The countries which Britain and France wished to obtain the Mandates for were all categorised as Class A Mandate countries that had 'reached a stage of development where their existence as independent nations can be provisionally recognised subject to the rendering of administrative advice and assistance be a Mandatory until such time as they are able to stand alone'. Critically, the article added the qualification that the 'wishes of these communities must be a principal consideration in the selection of the Mandatory'.[105]

King–Crane Commission

Following Balfour's visit to the USA in May 1917, President Woodrow Wilson was well aware of his intentions and commitment to formulating a declaration on Palestine favouring the creation of a Jewish homeland.[106] However, at the Conference and before allocating which powers should be assigned which Mandate countries, he wanted two issues to be considered:

the ‘Fourteen Points’ relating to self-determination he had presented to Congress and the opinions of the peoples in the respective territories.[107]

He proposed the setting up of a commission to hear the evidence of the people in Greater Syria in which he included Lebanon and Palestine. Wilson’s view was in line with the proposed Article 22, as well as the apparent intentions of the Cairo statement and the even more widely publicised Anglo-French Declaration. However, neither the British nor the French supported Wilson and they, along with the Italian government, withdrew from the commission.[108] As a result, it was composed exclusively of nominees of the USA: the academic Dr Henry C. King, president of Oberlin College, and the wealthy businessman Charles Richard Crane. Unlike any British or French politician before them, they sought the views of the people in the region, including the Syrian Congress who made a submission to the King–Crane Commission.[109]

The King–Crane Commission received submissions and gathered testimonies in Palestine, Syria, Transjordan, Lebanon and at Adana from 16 June to early August 1919. They drew a distinction between the concept of a ‘Jewish homeland’ and the aspirations of the Zionists for a ‘Jewish state’. ‘For a national home for the Jewish people is not equivalent to making Palestine into a Jewish State; nor can the erection of such a Jewish State be accomplished without the gravest trespass upon the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine.’[110] Having started from a position of sympathy for the Zionist project, the evidence that they gathered led them to revise their views and they concluded by recommending ‘serious modification of the extreme Zionist position’.[111] In general, therefore, the conclusions of the King–Crane Commission were similar to the positions adopted in July 1919 by the Greater Syrian Congress.[112] Having taken the evidence, they concluded that there should be one state of Greater Syria, to include Lebanon and Palestine, with Faisal as its king under a United States Mandate. Great Britain was the second choice for the Mandate.[113]

The report of the King–Crane Commission was handed to the Paris Peace Conference in August 1919. The British and the French governments opposed its findings. No doubt in part aided by the absence of Wilson from the Conference through ill-health, the report was marginalised and not published until 1922. Unsurprisingly the two European powers had no

enthusiasm for publishing the report when the evidence from the petitions to the Commission showed a clear repudiation of the Balfour Declaration and a preference for the USA as the Mandatory power.[114] These findings constituted a rejection of the aspirations of the British, the French and the Zionist movement and were largely in keeping with the aims of the Greater Syrian Congress and the representatives of the Arab peoples of the region.

LEAGUE OF NATIONS, BALFOUR AND THE MANDATE

The Zionist Organisation made a submission to the Peace Conference on 3 February 1919, but this was not the sole route it followed to gain its objective. Whilst deliberations were taking place in Paris, the Zionist Commission was in the process of establishing itself in Palestine and cementing its privileged relationship with the British government. Chaim Weizmann was in regular contact with Winston Churchill, the secretary of state.[115] On 3 January 1919 in London, Weizmann and Emir Faisal, who was under pressure from the British, signed an agreement which proposed the adoption of 'such measures … as will afford the fullest guarantees for carrying into effect the British Government's Declaration of the 2nd of November 1917'. Furthermore, the document included a recognition by each party of the other as being the custodians of the 'national aspirations' of the Palestinians and Jews respectively.[116]

The Faisal–Weizmann agreement written, like the Balfour Declaration itself, in the form of a treaty between states, contained no recognition of the Palestinians as having any role to play in determining the future of the area.[117] Article IX of the agreement specified that any 'matters which may arise between contracting parties shall be referred to the British Government for arbitration'.[118] The document was an endorsement of Britain's hegemonic position and the neo-colonial status of whatever entities were established in due course. Faisal subsequently added a codicil, which Weizmann co-signed, stating that 'Provided the Arabs shall obtain their independence as demanded … I shall concur in the above articles. But if the slightest modification or departure were to be made, I shall not be bound by a single word of the present Agreement.'[119] Faisal had in fact made a crucial concession to the British and the Zionists indicating that Palestine was not his priority and that there was not necessarily any unanimity between him and other Arab leaders.

In October 1918 Faisal had established an Arab government in Damascus with himself as monarch, but his credibility was subsequently damaged by the January 1919 agreement with Weizmann. In March 1920 the Syrian National Congress declared independence for Syria, including Palestine. On 25 April 1920 the Supreme Council of the Allies at San Remo confirmed the assignment of the Mandate for Palestine and Mesopotamia to the British, and that for Syria and Lebanon to the French. French troops were already in Greater Syria having disembarked at Beirut on 8 October 1918, and set up their base in the west of the region. On 14 July, the French gave Faisal an ultimatum to submit, which he conceded to. However, supporters of the Syrian Congress who resisted the French were defeated, thus enabling the occupiers to enter Damascus on 24 July 1920.[120]

The terms of all the Mandates, including the Mandate allotted to France, were contained in the Treaty of Sèvres finalised on 10 August 1920. Nevertheless, it was not until 24 July 1922 that the League of Nations finally ratified the document. The Balfour Declaration was the political basis of the British Mandate for Palestine and was approved even though within the Cabinet there had been dissident voices that argued against the formulations contained in it.[121] The qualification expressed in Article 22 – that those to be governed under the Mandate system must have their wishes recognised as 'a principal consideration in the selection of the Mandatory' – was completely ignored.

Pre-empting both the treaties adopted following the Paris Peace Conference and the decisions of the League of Nations, the British began to take steps to implement the Mandate. In April 1920, Sir Herbert Samuel was appointed high commissioner for Palestine, replacing the military authority that had been in charge since Allenby's entry to Jerusalem. His support for the Zionist cause was well known as a result of the January 1915 paper, *The Future of Palestine*, he had submitted to the Cabinet proposing that Palestine be made into a homeland for the Jewish people.[122] He firmly believed that in supporting such a move the British Empire would be enhancing its prestige and fulfilling 'her historic part as civiliser of the backward countries'.[123]

Lord Curzon, the foreign secretary, suggested to Samuel that he reconsider his acceptance of the post. In addition, Allenby and General Bols, the chief administrator of the Occupied Enemy Territory

Administration, expressed deep concerns about Samuel because they regarded him as an inappropriate candidate.[124] Arab political figures shared Curzon's opinion that Samuel's association with Zionism made him unsuitable. Notwithstanding this opposition he took up the post on 1 July 1920.[125] Both the timing and the candidate selected were an indication of the resolve of the British government to proceed with the implementation of the Balfour Declaration. Whatever the intentions of the Covenant of the League of Nations in describing the Mandate as a 'sacred trust of civilisation', the British were determined to be in sole control of the destiny of Palestine and take little heed of the views of the indigenous peoples.

ARAB AND PALESTINIAN OPPOSITION TO THE MANDATE

In Palestine events did not stand still. Although the Balfour Declaration was not officially publicised in Palestine until 1920, evidence of its existence had emerged in the Egyptian press just a few days after its release to Lord Rothschild.[126] The Palestinian population, who under British military rule had no control over immigration, became concerned at the increasing numbers of Zionist settlers and what this meant for their aspirations.[127] The First Arab Congress meeting in Damascus, on 2 July 1919, had already sounded the alarm calling for an independent Greater Syria which would include Palestine. A special congress was convened in Haifa later the same year to coordinate local committees of resistance to forward this campaign. A second Arab Congress, meeting in Damascus on 8 March 1920, repudiated the Mandate proposals for the country and proclaimed Syrian independence. The Damascus Congress gave a clear indication that the intentions of the Zionist Commission were well known, well understood and completely opposed.

Colonial settlement projects such as the Palestine Jewish Colonisation Association had been inaugurated in the 1880s by Baron Edmond de Rothschild.[128] Between 1897 and 1914 the Jewish population in Palestine doubled.[129] The number of immigrants increased rapidly from an estimated 35,000 in the twenty-one years from 1882 to 1903, to 40,000 in the ten years from 1904 to 1914, and a further 40,000 in the five years from 1918 to 1923.[130] Events like the Kishinev pogrom of 6 and 7 April 1903 caused many Jews to flee Eastern Europe, some to the USA and elsewhere but with increasing numbers seeking safety in Palestine. As more land was sold,

predominantly by absentee landlords, Palestinian families were deprived of their livelihoods.[131] Inevitably antagonisms arose around land disputes, with the creation of colonies which progressively replaced Palestinian workers with newly arrived settlers. With the expansion of the influence of the Zionist Organisation, successive groups of Jewish immigrants tended to have a more explicitly colonising agenda reflected in their endorsement of segregationist employment policies which rendered Palestinian peasants and farmers both landless and unemployed.[132] In the context of an overwhelmingly agricultural Palestinian society these developments had a major impact, and were resisted by the agricultural workers and their families as land sales increased.[133]

For the Palestinian population, immigration lay at the root of the grievances that led to the incidents of 1920 and 1921. Between 2 and 4 April 1920, violent disturbances took place which resulted in nine fatalities (five Jews and four Palestinians) and over 200 injured. These events became the subject of investigation by a Court of Inquiry presided over by Major General P.C. Palin of the British army in Egypt.[134] Although its findings were never published, they expressed concern about the growing presumptuousness of the newly established Zionist Commission during the military administration.[135] Palin's Court of Inquiry concluded that the population of Palestine felt 'disappointment at the non-fulfilment of promises made to them by British propaganda; [an] inability to reconcile the Allies' declared policy of self-determination with the Balfour Declaration'.[136] The report made clear in its conclusions that it considered the Zionists largely to blame for the political environment that had been created. Samuel, however, took steps to ensure that the findings were never published.[137]

Whatever misgivings there had been amongst sections of the military personnel or some of the political leadership within Britain about implementing the Balfour Declaration, these were superseded in April 1920 by decisions made at the San Remo Conference and the actions of the Lloyd George government. However, the fundamental contradiction embodied in the Balfour Declaration continued to surface. Samuel tried to assure the Palestinian community that he was committed to an 'equality of obligation' based on 'a full protection of the rights of the existing population', but that this was within a framework which would deliver 'the satisfaction of the

legitimate aspirations of the Jewish race throughout the world in relation to Palestine'. He acknowledged that 'to install the Jews in Palestine might mean the expulsion of the Arabs', but he regarded such an outcome as a failure to implement the terms of the Balfour Declaration.[138]

The British attitude to Arab self-determination in general was most graphically summed up by David Lloyd George's response to a delegation of Indian Muslims on 24 March 1921:

> As to the Arab States, some of them are absolutely free from control. I do not think however that any responsible Arab Chiefs would like to try the experiment of being absolutely without the support of a Great Western Power in Mesopotamia or Syria. They are people who have not for hundreds of years had control of these States. They are not a coherent people, they are tribal.[139]

The statement encapsulated the British imperialist perspective and the orientalist views of its politicians. He made clear that any consideration of the future of the Arab states was a matter for the British to determine, and whilst he professed strong support for the religious independence of the peoples of the empire he was intransigent with regard to the creation of a homeland for the Jews in Palestine. For Lloyd George, Palestine fell completely outside any consideration of self-determination.

The Mandate, finally adopted by the Council of the League of Nations on 24 July 1922, incorporated the exact wording of the Balfour Declaration, asserting that

> the Mandatory (Britain) should be responsible for putting into effect the declaration originally made on November 2, 1917, by the Government of His Britannic Majesty, and adopted by the said Powers, in favour of the establishment in Palestine of a National Home for the Jewish people, it being clearly understood that nothing should be done which might prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.[140]

At the same time as reaffirming the terms of the Balfour Declaration, the Mandate left the British to decide how to implement the policy and what Zionist organisation to collaborate with. Of course, this had already been decided by the British in 1917.

3

The Mandate and Palestinian Politics

OTTOMAN RULE AND THE CHALLENGE OF IMPERIALISM

The process of change in the nature of imperialism led to the growth of a highly competitive internationalised economic and political environment which contributed significantly to causing World War I. The conflict engulfed the principal competitors, transforming the inter-imperialist rivalry from a largely territorial confrontation into one more typically based on economic dominance. This form of dominance was achieved through gaining control over raw materials and the monopolisation of national markets. These new features of economic, social and political transformations began to supersede direct colonisation, as hegemony was progressively achieved by the incorporation of subaltern economies into a world market. This asymmetrical relationship, which had already begun to appear in countries like Argentina and Thailand, was then encapsulated in bilateral treaties confirming the dominant–subaltern status.[1] The Arab leaders' alliance with the British during World War I, seeking to break from the Ottoman Empire, was based on just such a perspective and formed the basis of the proposals by the Palestinian leadership to the British as a means of progressing to self-determination.

The Ottoman Empire, which had existed from 1517 until 1917, had established economic, social, legal and political structures. During the nineteenth century the Ottoman Empire was undergoing change. British trade with the region grew considerably, influencing the crops grown, the

forms of landownership, the emergence of new social layers, the increased secularisation of society and the development of new political forces. Sections of the empire were already being separated off and colonised. In Palestine, Western European capitalism, and the British specifically, encountered a society with established and highly complex political, economic and social relations. The character of Palestinian society was radically different from other colonising experiences that the British had had over the previous centuries, in other parts of the world. The challenge of incorporating Palestine into the imperial matrix was more complicated than almost any other colonial project the British had undertaken.

From at least the early nineteenth century onwards the whole region had been going through an accelerating process of integration into the world economic market.[2] In the second half of the nineteenth century the Ottoman rulers had established the *sanjaks* (sub-province) of Acre and Nablus, within the *vilayet* (province) of Beirut and the *mutasarrifate* (sub-province or district) of Jerusalem. Jerusalem, perhaps as a consequence of its religious importance, came under the direct rule of Constantinople. The political administrative districts also had a degree of symmetry, with the economic structure of the area linking commercial centres to surrounding rural areas.[3] Coastal towns developed, with the economic expansion resulting from increased trade and as a consequence of the Ottoman state enlarging the infrastructure of the area.[4]

The restructuring of the Ottoman Empire, in the *Tanzimat* period from 1838 until 1876, brought major changes to many areas, including those of finance, economics, education and communications. The Land Law of 1858 and the law of 1867 began to transform longstanding forms of ownership, turning land into a commodity to be bought and sold. Increased international trading encouraged the move from the production of crops for consumption to their production as commodities for market. The alienation of the land encouraged purchases by the wealthy, expanding their ownership and opening it to acquisition by colonisers, enthusiastic to establish ‘export-oriented farms’. British investors, for example, sought to purchase large amounts of land around Izmir. One estimate suggests they bought around one-third of cultivable land in the region, importing large quantities of agricultural tools and machinery for their farms.[5] This type of expansion had a greater effect on areas within reach of the coast, which

could be drawn into trading, but did not extend uniformly across all of the Ottoman Empire. However, in Palestine, under the British Mandate, these changes to the landownership laws had a particular effect on the *fellahin*, as the Zionist colonists, with relatively easier access to capital, were more able to purchase land initially from large absentee-landlords wishing to sell.

LANDOWNERSHIP AND SOCIAL FORMATION

The *Tanzimat* Land Laws of 1858 had codified forms of ownership, to extend the empire's tax base, whilst the 1867 law had extended the heritability of land and, with provisos, granted permission to foreigners to own land. These laws formed the basis of a process which was to lead to the dislocation of the existing feudal land relations in the Ottoman Empire, including in Palestine, where the *fellahin* were obliged to work for the landowner and provide a share of the surplus produce.[6] This was not a process which happened simultaneously in Palestine let alone throughout the Ottoman Empire

In Palestine the land tenure system was somewhat complicated with at least six forms of ownership: *mulk, miri, waqf, mawat, mahlul* and *matruka*.[7] Only the *mulk* form of ownership involved the right of freehold over the land. All other forms of ownership included varying degrees of conditionality which might, under certain circumstances such as periods of non-cultivation, result in the loss of the lands. The Palestinian community was largely based in rural areas. Here most of the land was held in the form of *miri* or land in which the usufruct, or right of use (*tasarruf*), was in the gift of the state.[8] In fact the law considered the usufructuary possession of land as a 'personal, hereditary, and transferable right'.[9] There was little difference between *miri* and outright freehold, but this did not afford protection against distraint.

Whilst the bulk of the population were rurally based and worked in agriculture, the economic changes taking place, particularly in the field of commerce, led to the creation of forms of employment requiring new skills, and hence the growth of new social layers. The British occupied a land which, unlike many of those previously colonised, was already engaged with Western European capitalism.[10] A developing public media existed, and there was a political structure and, albeit with a limited suffrage, forms of representation. The British were seeking to hegemonise a country which

had already experienced one form of imperial rule and where there was an active public debate about future political options. This was a different environment from that which British imperialism had met in Australia for example.

The population of Palestine in the early 1880s was an estimated 457,592, living in 672 villages. Most of the inhabitants were Muslims engaged in agriculture, the larger portion, the *fellahin* or peasant, working the land.[11] The large landowners and those who held positions which were part of the structure of the Ottoman Empire tended to live in the urban areas and have come to be known as the *a'yan* or 'notables'.[12] This group of families held prestigious positions in society arising from these posts, their wealth and the influence they were able to exercise over the rural population.[13] Albert Hourani has described the symbiotic relationship between the *a'yan* and the *fellahin* as a consequence of mutually sympathetic and antagonistic dependencies:

> The political influence of the notables rests on two factors: on the one hand, they must possess 'access' to authority, and so be able to advise, to warn, and in general to speak for society or some part of it at the ruler's court; on the other, they must have some social power of their own, whatever its form and origin, which is not dependent on the ruler and gives them a position of accepted and 'natural' leadership.[14]

These relationships often came to influence the political allegiances which people held.

Like all ruling groups the Palestinian *a'yan* were not monolithic. Some, like the Khalidis, were religious scholars holding more or less hereditary posts in the *Sharia* courts. Others, like the Jerusalem-based Nashashibis and Husseinis, were large landowners. The changes that had taken place under the Ottomans impacted differently on the two groups. These landowning groups were the principal beneficiaries of the changes brought about by the Land Laws as they 'moved quickly to amass agricultural land … [using] available legal … illegal and extra-legal methods' to do so.[15] The durability of the influence of the *a'yan* as a whole can be seen from the frequency with which family names recurred as prominent political figures throughout the Mandate period.[16] Members of the *a'yan* were to play the leading formal role in Palestinian politics for the first decade of the Mandate period.

It is important to note, however, that not all the owners of land in Palestine lived within its boundaries. The first substantial sales of lands to the Zionist colonisers were made by absentee landlords like the Sursuq family, based in Beirut. The buying and selling of land by these absentee landlords frequently resulted in the *fellahin* becoming landless and deeply indebted. In 1920 the Sursuq family sold around 50,000 acres of land: a transaction which led to the eviction of some 8,000 sharecroppers.[17] Those selling also included German and French landowners.[18] The sales were governed by the *Tanzimat* Land Laws and often resulted in those working the lands being evicted by Ottoman troops. From 1917 onwards it was British troops that enforced the court decisions based on the same laws. As a result of these sales peasant producers lost their livelihoods and were transformed into sharecroppers, indebted tenants or dispossessed wage labourers. Opposition to the sale of land to the Zionists led, as it had already in the nineteenth century, to mass demonstrations in both 1920 and 1921.

Those who were removed from their lands and able to find employment became part of the then small Palestinian working class principally based in the docks, quarries, small-scale industries and on the railways. As this process accelerated, those unable to find employment gravitated towards the cities and added to the ranks of the landless poor, something the British feared. Even those who retained a *lot viable*, an area of land deemed adequate to ensure self-sufficiency, were frequently obliged to abandon it in return for money to pay their debts.[19]

In Palestine, following the introduction of the laws, the *fellahin*, 'fearful that land registration was the harbinger of new taxes, or military conscription … frequently preferred, or even sought, the protection of an urban notable, under whose name they consented to have their land registered'.[20] Furthermore, there was no cadastral survey of land in Palestine that could readily provide information to the military administration about ownership, and this subsequently made it difficult for the *fellahin* to establish their inherited right to ownership or even usufruct.[21] The *fellahin* who were displaced were deprived of their livelihoods and forced to seek employment elsewhere or, if it was possible, to work in the countryside under new, more disadvantageous, terms of daily or seasonal engagement. Many went to the expanding towns on the coast seeking employment as workers, however there they met challenges produced by

the newly arrived colonists and the exclusionary policies pursued by the Zionist organisations.

The implementation of the laws which facilitated land sales, authorised by the courts and enforced by the state, subverted the credibility of a political stance which advocated reliance on the Ottoman Empire as the best defender of the interests of the agriculturally based Palestinian society. Since the turn of the century reports of protests by *fellahin* facing eviction from lands purchased by the Zionist colonisers had already appeared in the Arab media. The earliest major dispute over land occurred in 1885 at Petah Tikva. Disturbances also occurred at Tiberias in 1901–2 and at ‘Affula in 1910–11.[22] There was a growing realisation that the advance of Zionist settlement was unlikely to be halted by those whose laws facilitated the purchase of land and colonisation in the first place. The war and the Arab Revolt posed an alternative perspective. Amongst some of those who had been advocating a pan-Arabist political orientation against the Ottoman Empire, the view grew that an alliance with those Arab leaders who were preparing to link up with the British against Constantinople might lead to the introduction of more effective measures to prevent land sales and help them retain their lands.[23]

During the Mandate period the laws which had been introduced under Ottoman rule were augmented by the imposition by the British of further legal constraints. The high commissioner introduced a series of measures which had an especial effect on landownership. The Land Transfer Ordinance of 1920 and the Survey Ordinance facilitated the sale of lands which aided the purchases by the Zionists. The Mawet Land Ordinance (1921) made it difficult for the *fellahin* to incorporate neighbouring wasteland into the plots they worked. In addition, the Mahlul Land Ordinance (1920) prevented Palestinian farmers from extending their lands. In these latter two examples the ordinances countermanded existing Ottoman law which the British were meant to retain.[24]

The urban-based Palestinian Christians in the country numbered around 25,000 and were generally not engaged in agricultural work. Under terms established with successive rulers of the Ottoman Empire, France acted as a guardian of Christians in Syria, Lebanon and Palestine. Orthodox Christians came under Russian protection.[25] The Christians benefitted from the protections afforded by these capitulations or concessions, which in reality

placed foreign residents outside the law. These privileges, together with their access to missionary schools, made them well placed to take on roles in commerce working with European traders and the expanding professions.[26] Christian merchants paid lower rates of duty than Muslim merchants and, benefitting from their more favourable relationship with European traders, often 'established themselves as the moneylenders and bankers for Muslim artisans, landowners and peasants'.[27] Newspaper proprietors and editors could also be found amongst this growing middle class. Like their Muslim counterparts, the names of members of prominent Christian families recur as leading participants in Palestinian political life.[28]

Having a population very similar in size to the Arab Christians, the Jewish community lived mainly in the four holy cities of Jerusalem, Tiberias, Safed and Hebron.[29] Whilst many Jews were religious scholars living off alms, others were engaged in artisanal work providing services to their communities.[30] In some fields, like finance, they played a role similar to other minority communities in the Ottoman Empire who facilitated trade and exchange at the point of encounter between majority communities and those outside.[31] These patterns began to change with successive *aliyah* (phases of immigration), especially from the beginning of the twentieth century onwards, as Jews who arrived from Eastern Europe brought different skills and experiences with them.

In an agricultural society like Palestine the nature of the ownership of the land was a central factor influencing not only the economic development of the country but also its social and political formation.

PALESTINIAN PRE-WAR POLITICS

As already noted, those *a'yan* who were large landowners tended, before the war, to adopt a pro-Ottoman perspective accepting the rule of Constantinople, believing that political changes should take place within the parameters of the empire. The Ottoman Porte provided the framework for their world and their principal ambition was to enjoy greater autonomy within the empire. Although they wished to retain the status quo, this viewpoint came under greater challenge as Arab resentment grew towards the Turkification and centralisation promoted by the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) which came to power in 1908.

The CUP, which had been organising clandestinely amongst both civilians and within the military, eventually won a majority of the seats in the lower parliament in the election towards the end of 1908. The following year they faced the challenge by a section of the army which sought to displace them.[32] However, this attempt to overthrow them was itself defeated within a week. George Antonius, in *The Arab Awakening*, expresses the view that there was a contradiction at the heart of CUP politics with its pan-Turanian emphasis. The promotion of a Turkish focus to their programme was in conflict with an Ottomanist orientation based on the interests of the whole empire. This inherent mismatch was exacerbated by the adoption of a strong centralising tendency, the result of influences originating from the French revolution.[33] These contradictions were to have a bearing on the evolution of Palestinian politics too.

Through the second half of the nineteenth century, coastal towns and cities had expanded and became more influential. The landowning families who had played a leading role within society began to be challenged by a nascent merchant bourgeoisie, who benefitted from the increased integration of the economy into trade primarily with Britain but also with other countries in Western Europe.[34] Additionally the activities generated by these developments gave rise to a middle class of technicians and professionals not formed by or obligated to the traditional relationships and patronage that had shaped rural society.[35] Property developers like Uthman al-Nashashibi and Raghib al-Nashashibi, who became the Jerusalem district engineer in 1914, were representative of these emerging groups.[36] 'Izzat Darwaza, who came from a family of merchants in Nablus and had worked as an administrator in the Department of Postal and Telegraphic Services, was to become the secretary of the First Palestinian Congress in 1919.[37]

The CUP reinstated the constitution in 1908 and adopted the Electoral Law, which had eighty-three clauses detailing the nature of the suffrage, the conduct of elections, eligibility to stand for positions and the designation of electoral districts. Under this law, which in many respects resembled the French electoral law of 1789, only males over the age of twenty-five who paid some taxes were eligible to vote as 'primary voters'. On the basis of one man for every 500 voters these 'primary voters' elected 'secondary voters', who in turn would elect the deputies on the basis of one for every 50,000 male residents of a constituency.[38] Only males above the age of

thirty with 'ability in Turkish and enjoying civil rights could be elected deputy, unless he had accepted citizenship or employment in the service of a foreign government, was bankrupt or a domestic servant, or was stigmatized by "notoriety for ill deeds"'.[39] Women and less well-off members of society were excluded from any electoral involvement. Unsurprisingly political representation to the Ottoman political bodies, as it had been in the nineteenth century, was exclusively in the hands of the *a'yan*. Nevertheless, by the standards of the day, the concept of elected representatives was present within Palestinian society.

This process not only favoured the election of members of the *a'yan* but excluded the *fellahin*, the newer middle class and women. Those who came to prominence were often from *a'yan* families already playing leading roles in the military, legal or administrative fields within the empire.[40] Ruhi al Khalidi, for example, who was elected to the Ottoman Parliament in 1908, was the nephew of Yusuf Diya' al Khalidi, who had been a member during a previous period of parliamentary rule. In 1911, Ruhi al Khalidi and Sa'id al-Husseini, both representatives from Jerusalem, spoke in the Ottoman Parliament about Zionism and the threat it posed.[41] They were joined in this intervention by Shukri al-'Asali from Damascus who, as a local official, had tried to block land sales in Nazareth. Despite their critiques of Zionism these parliamentarians were loyal supporters of the Ottoman Empire, and the Arabism that they expressed was a form of cultural nationalism rather than a separatist aspiration.[42]

Expressions of anti-Zionist opinions were not restricted to the parliamentary arena. Whilst publishing *al-Karmil* in 1910, Najib Nassar simultaneously worked to establish an organisation in Haifa to encourage a boycott of the buying and selling of land to the Zionist colonisers. The Patriotic Ottoman Party was set up in Jaffa in the same year, and in 1913 an attempt was made to convene a conference in Nablus in opposition to Zionism.[43] This growing antagonism to Zionism predated the Balfour Declaration and was reflected in opinions expressed by the newspapers that began to be published around the same time.[44]

In the post-war environment all existing political, economic and social formations were faced with a series of problems. The *a'yan* whose privileges rested on their capacity to act as intermediaries between the Ottoman rulers and the peoples of the area of Greater Syria were, following

the war, deprived of their patron and to maintain their traditional role they would need to convince the British of their indispensability. The political bodies, through which they had made representation to those who ruled in Constantinople no longer existed. The economic environment to which they had been used had already begun to change because of the Ottoman Land Laws turning land into a commodity for sale and purchase on the open market. The arrival of a colonising power, applying those laws and authorising their utilisation by the Zionist settlers resulted in sections of the *a'yan* – mainly those outside Palestine – selling land to profit from the increases in prices. Throughout the 1920s however, as entrepreneurs and nascent capitalists, they were faced by a further problem and that was the arrival of Zionist colonisers, some of whom were able to access capital on a larger scale than themselves.

These accumulating challenges emerged in the context of the imperial settlement which the British and the French were intent on imposing. The implementation of the Sykes–Picot agreement imposed on the Palestinian society choices about the direction of political travel they should pursue. Following their own agenda, the British were to ignore the promises contained in the McMahon–Hussein correspondence which Arab leaders believed expressed an undertaking to support the right of self-determination for Arab lands.

THE WAR, THE ARAB REVOLT AND PALESTINIAN NATIONALISM

Even though Palestinian and other Arab voices were heard in the Ottoman Parliament, discontent amongst the Arab provinces of the empire at the path followed by the CUP between 1908 and 1912 began to spread amongst numerous groups in Greater Syria. Amongst the Arab population this political shift was reflected in the opinions expressed in the media and through new political and cultural bodies such as *al-Muntada al-Adabi* (the Literary Club), established in Constantinople in 1909, and *Hizb al-Lamarkaziya al-Idariya al-'Uthmani* (the Ottoman Decentralisation Party), founded in Cairo in 1912.[45] Whilst some of the prominent families remained pro-Ottoman, others developed a pan-Islamist outlook, whilst yet others gravitated towards a pan-Arabist opinion. However, the Anglo-French imposition of the terms of the Sykes–Picot agreement, splitting Greater Syria into two distinct French and British zones, forced a further shift towards Arab nationalism.[46]

Amongst sections of the Palestinian *a'yan*, who held positions under Sultan Abdul Hamid II, the tendency had been to emphasise the unity of the Ottoman Empire and its status as the Caliphate. This pan-Islamist position was expressed by people like As'ad Shuqayri, the Acre representative who served in the Ottoman Parliament from 1912 to 1914, and Shukri al-Husseini, a Jerusalem high-ranking Ottoman administrator.[47] As'ad Shuqayri demonstrated his commitment to the Porte when he reported to the Ottoman authorities that a nationalist revolt was being planned.[48] The loyalty to the Porte, of this grouping, was not broken even by the decisions of the Ottoman regime to hang or imprison and torture Palestinian nationalists in Syria in 1915 and 1916.[49]

This pan-Islamist perspective generally sought decentralisation and greater autonomy within the administrative structures. Its influence was to some extent reflected during the war by the absence of any open revolt against the Ottoman authorities. In reality of course, the picture was more nuanced, since some recruiting was carried out in Palestine for the Sharifian army.[50] However, over time the repressive regime imposed by the Porte coupled with the corrosive privations experienced by the mass of the population during the war progressively undermined pro-Ottoman sympathies.[51]

In 1917, following the defeat of the Ottoman forces in Palestine, a pro-Ottoman position became less sustainable and the majority of the *a'yan* turned to the British to preserve their status. The *a'yan* political leaders at first looked relatively benevolently on the occupiers, seeking as little disruption to their way of life as possible. Gradually, however, under growing pressure from sizeable sections of the population, they were forced to call on the Mandate authority to halt the sale of land and limit Jewish immigration. In the coming years the role that they had played as supposed intermediaries came under constant pressure.

The Cabinet in Britain was made aware of the complexities of the situation in Palestine. In a report to the War Cabinet in January 1918, Sir Mark Sykes complained that, despite the credibility the British had earned in Palestine for their defeat of the Ottoman forces, 'a whole crowd of weeds are growing around us'. He listed six concerns, of which he placed 'Arab unrest in regard to Zionism' at the top, followed by 'French jealousy in regard to our position in Palestine … friction among the Arabs … Franco-

Italian jealousy … [and] Zionist … suspicion and chauvinism'. He argued that there was an urgent need for the centralisation of British administration in the area to ensure a coherent response to all of these challenges.[52]

The evidence given to the King–Crane Commission in 1919 by a variety of Arab sources in Greater Syria reflected an awareness that the old Ottoman dispensations were no longer operative. The Commission's findings echoed the predominant Arab hope that a Mandatory power be installed which was favourable towards self-determination. Although the USA was named as the preferred option, there remained the view that the British, having endorsed the Arab Revolt, would look favourably on their hopes.[53]

GENERATIONAL SHIFTS AND PALESTINIAN POLITICS

After World War I, new Palestinian political organisations appeared, shaped by a younger generation whose experiences differed from their predecessors. This younger group was composed of people born at the end of the nineteenth century or in the early years of the twentieth. The older generation had been used to the customs and practices of the Ottoman rulers but the British occupation of Palestine severed that link. Perhaps understandably the older generation attempted to maintain the existing state of affairs by trying to replicate those relationships with the British. The younger generation, not having had that association with the Ottomans or having benefitted from such relationships, did not have their attitudes towards the new rulers shaped by the same experiences.[54]

To a degree this generational break was also linked to the emergence of new social layers. Typical of those who were, in the coming years, to play a prominent part in the initiation of a Palestinian response to the British was Yusuf al-'Isa, the editor of the newspaper *Filastin*, who like the aforementioned 'Izzat Darwaza, typified the newly emergent urban middle class.[55] Darwaza was amongst a group who met and discussed politics in Damascus alongside another young Jerusalemite, Hajj Amin al-Husseini, and Aref al-Aref, the young editor of *Suriyya al-Janubiyya*, (Southern Syria). On 31 May 1920, this group formed *al-Jam'iyya al-'Arabiyya al-Filastiniyya* (the Palestinian Arab Society).[56]

Whilst within the political groupings there was of course no absolute division on the basis of age, it was nevertheless a recurring phenomenon

that a younger generation came to the fore to take the lead in opposition to the Mandate. The attitude adopted by those groups dominated by the older generations, like the Muslim Christian Association (MCA), formally established in February 1919, was less confrontational than bodies formed and led by those who were younger, like *al-Nadi al-'Arabi* (the Arab Club) and *al-Muntada al-Adabi*. British officials, recognising these differences, looked upon the MCA more favourably and were even thought to have facilitated its establishment.[57] However, although these age differences were evident they did not produce a complete break of those involved with their family allegiances.[58]

THE DAMASCUS PROTOCOL

The emergence of these younger generations was foreshadowed by earlier events. New political forces began to emerge, often including members of a younger generation, oriented towards a pan-Arabist future for the region viewing Palestine as 'Southern Syria'. This Greater Syrian political project was developed clandestinely by members of groups like *al-Fatat* (the Young Arab Society) and *al-'Ahd* (the Covenant Society), who proposed an alliance between the Arab peoples seeking self-determination.[59] Having originally approached Emir Faisal in January 1915, later the same year, on 23 May in Damascus, they formally presented to him their proposals for the region with the request that it be presented to his father Sharif Hussein for his approval. Faisal, now a member of *al-Fatat*, returned to Mecca on 20 June 1915 and, with the support of his brother Abdullah, persuaded Hussein to endorse the document.[60]

The Damascus Protocol, or Damascus Programme as the document is sometimes referred to, has been called the 'foundation document and the lodestar of the Arab Revolt'.[61] The Arab leadership who were to enter into discussions with the British about an alliance against the Ottoman Empire defined their territorial expectations in a very precise manner:

> The recognition by Great Britain of the independence of the Arab countries lying within the following frontiers:
> North: The line Mersin-Adana to parallel 37°N. and thence along the line Birejik-Urfa-Mardin-Midiat-Jazirat (Ibn 'Umar)-Amadia to the Persian frontier;
> East: The Persian frontier down to the Persian Gulf;
> South: The Indian Ocean (with the exclusion of Aden, whose status was to be maintained);

West: The Red Sea and the Mediterranean Sea back to Mersin. The abolition of all exceptional privileges granted to the Capitulations. The conclusion of a definitive alliance between Great Britain and the future independent Arab state. The grant of economic preference to Great Britain.[62]

The boundary indicated to form the Western border of Arab lands incorporates the whole of Palestine, Lebanon and Syria. The Damascus Protocol was an explicit definition of the expectations as to what the leaders of the Arab Revolt sought for the region. This was to be the basis of their discussions with the British and what they expected to gain in return for their support against the Ottoman Empire.

Following Faisal's return to Mecca, Sharif Hussein's first note to Sir Henry McMahon, sent on 14 July 1915, used precisely the Protocol's formulations to define the geographical boundaries, adding the proposition that 'Great Britain will agree to the proclamation of an Arab Caliphate for Islam'.[63] The letter reiterated the proposal to give the British preferential economic treatment, and proposed the abolition of all capitulations in the Arab countries and the organisation of an international congress to order their abolition.[64] This proposition was entirely congruent with the British wish to gain economic hegemony in the region. The significance of the discussions which had taken place in Syria and Palestine was reflected in the War Cabinet exchanges of 16 December 1915, when Sir Mark Sykes expressed the view that, 'With regard to the Arab question, the fire, the spiritual fire, lies in Arabia proper, the intellectual and the organising power lie in Syria and Palestine, centred particularly at Beirut.'[65]

THE FIRST PALESTINIAN CONGRESS: JANUARY 1919

The formula of the Damascus Protocol was partially echoed in the positions adopted by the First Palestinian Congress held in Jerusalem between 27 January and 10 February 1919.[66] The Congress, presided over by 'Aref Pasha al-Dajani, president of the Jerusalem branch of the MCA, agreed a number of proposals and decided to send a delegation to the Paris Peace Conference.[67] They adopted the position that 'this district of ours, meaning Palestine, remain undetached from the independent Arab Syrian Government that is bound by Arab unity, and free from all foreign influence or protection'.[68] Expressing its desire for a Palestinian State, its opposition to Zionism and its rejection of France as a mandatory authority, the

Congress viewed Palestine as part of 'Arab Syria' and insisted on the unity of Palestine and Syria. It called upon 'its friend Great Britain in case of need for improvement and development of the country provided that this will not affect its independence and Arab Unity in any way and will keep good relations with the Allied Powers'.[69] This positive attitude towards the British was a product of the belief that what they were seeking was the application of the terms contained in the McMahon–Hussein correspondence.

Adopting an explicitly anti-Zionist position, the Congress emphasised the difference between its opposition to Zionist immigrants and those Jews, 'who have been Arabicized, who have been living in our province since before the war; they are as we are, and their loyalties are as our own'. There were some sections of the Sephardic Jews resident in Palestine who, in April 1920, responded to an appeal by the MCA, signed an anti-Zionist petition and three years later held a meeting in a synagogue expressing support for these views. These developments were opposed by the Jewish National Council who stopped any of these events being widely publicised.[70] The key focus of the Congress was opposition to the British actions and policies centred on the issues of land sales and Jewish immigration.

The British and the French sought to apply pressure on those attending the Congress. Both parties lobbied sections of the Congress in order to persuade those present to adopt positions favourable to one or other country. British intelligence officers and members of both the French and Italian consulates in Jerusalem attended the Congress, pushing their respective country's agenda. The outcomes of the Congress were influenced by these countervailing pressures and added to the dynamics generated by the differentiation taking place within Palestinian society.[71]

The Congress failed to resolve the question as to what the relationship between Palestine and Syria should be. As a consequence, delegations reflecting the two wings of the Congress opinion were prepared, both to the Paris Peace Conference and to Faisal in Damascus.[72] Those who put forward the proposal for an independent Palestine did so on the basis of securing an alliance with the British rather than breaking with it. However, it was the call for a united Greater Syria that prompted the British to block the publication of the Congress decisions and ban the delegation leaving for

the Paris Peace Conference.[73] A similar fate befell the attempts by Egyptian nationalists seeking representation at the peace talks.[74] In Egypt, faced with growing pro-independence protests, the British had been forced to stop the demobilisation of the army, as they were concerned that there might be further demonstrations against them.[75]

Although some small nations from Europe, alongside a number of representatives from Latin America, were present at the Paris Peace Conference, the Palestinians were not given a seat.[76] They were denied a right to present their case for self-determination. Whilst the leaders of the Zionist movement were allowed to address the Conference directly, the Palestinian demands could only be presented through Emir Faisal.[77] Speaking on the 6 February 1919, Faisal's statement emphasised that the Palestinian claims were based on President Woodrow Wilson's own declaration in favour of the right of nations to self-determination.[78] Despite the attendance of delegates from a variety of countries, some of whom might have been sympathetic to the Palestinian cause, the major decisions were ultimately made by the 'Big Three': Lloyd George, Clemenceau and Wilson.[79]

IMPERIALISM CHALLENGED

Both during and after the war the British Empire came under attack, through anti-colonialist and anti-imperialist struggles, as movements in a number of countries disputed Britain's right to rule over them. The war had weakened the capacities of all the imperial powers to maintain their control over vast colonial territories. On 18 June 1920, at a Conference of Ministers in Downing Street, the view was expressed that the British had to limit the extent of their 'responsibilities' in order to avoid a 'grave risk of disaster'. The report made clear that 'Should the Cabinet decide to continue the attempt to maintain simultaneously our existing commitments at Constantinople, Palestine, Mesopotamia and Persia, the possibility of disaster occurring in any or all of these theatres must be faced, and the likelihood of this will increase every day.'[80]

This heralded a further rupture with the imperialism of the past, revealing the limitations of occupation and colonisation as the staple hegemonising practice. The sharpest of these struggles in the British Empire was undoubtedly in Ireland, but elsewhere – in Egypt, Iraq and India –

British hegemony was under question as mass nationalist movements developed, some resulting in armed confrontations. In other areas of the world change was also being signalled by the growth of anti-colonialist and anti-imperialist movements. The South African Native National Congress (forerunner of the African National Congress) was founded in 1919 and the First Pan-African Congress took place in Paris in the same year. Vietnamese nationalists as well began to organise in Paris in 1919. There were the May Fourth Movement protests in China against imperialism, and 1919 there were anti-colonialist and anti-racist riots in Jamaica, British Honduras and Trinidad.

In the Near East the response of the British, as it had been during the war, was to seek to create alliances which would benefit the achievement of its longer term goals. At the beginning of January 1919, the British persuaded Emir Faisal to enter into an agreement with Cham Weizmann, in the hope that the Emir would then, in turn, encourage the Palestinians to endorse the Balfour Declaration.[81] The accord, dated 3 January 1919, expressed support for the proposal that Faisal and Weizmann would draw up boundaries 'between the Arab State and Palestine' and that all 'necessary measures shall be taken to encourage and stimulate immigration of Jews into Palestine on a large scale'.[82] Britain was endorsed as the sole arbiter should any disagreements arise regarding the implementation of the agreement.[83] Although little or nothing came of this, it did of course reveal to the British the extent to which Faisal was committed to pursuing the objectives of the Damascus Protocol and what his personal priorities were.[84] According to a report to the British Cabinet dated 12 June 1919, Emir Faisal had from the preceding month 'begun the work of breaking down the dislike of the Arabs to the policy of the Zionist Jews' and had informed an Arab delegation in Damascus that 'he did not consider the aims of the Arabs to be incompatible with those of the Zionists'.[85] Whatever the estimation of Faisal's stance on the British position and on the Zionists, General Clayton, the military commander in Jerusalem, was sufficiently cautious about the response of the people in the city to ban the distribution of a 'Moslem-Christian society' circular affirming that Palestine was part of Syria and opposing the proposal for a 'national home for the Jews'.[86]

On 2 July 1919 the General Syrian Congress, meeting in Damascus, opposed Faisal's position. It rejected the 'claims of the Zionists for the

establishment of a Jewish commonwealth in that part of southern Syria which is known as Palestine'. Echoing the First Palestinian Congress, the Damascus Congress asserted that: 'We desire that there should be no dismemberment of Syria and no separation of Palestine … from the mother country'.[87] Both placed their trust in the British, but Faisal and the notables, who led the MCA, were at odds with each other about the direction of travel expressed in the agreement with Weizmann. At root this disagreement mirrored the ambiguity of the Balfour Declaration and the policies of the British. It is little wonder that a degree of confusion reigned when, on 12 November 1919, the British Cabinet agreed a statement 'that the Balfour Declaration of 2 November 1917 … does *not* contemplate … the flooding of Palestine with Jewish immigrants … [the] spoliation or eviction of the present landowners in Palestine or the grant of profitable concessions to individuals … or … the government of a majority by a minority'.[88]

The British, however, faced other challenges, especially in Egypt where widespread revolt, including orchestrated strikes, broke out.[89] The home secretary circulated monthly and sometimes weekly reports to the Cabinet on the 'Progress of Revolutionary Movements' assessing political developments within the empire and beyond. Cabinet papers reveal that, since the 1917 Russian Revolution, the British were even more worried about the trajectory of any anti-colonialist movements.[90] Although there was no substantial evidence of widespread Bolshevik influence, their support for the right to self-determination and disclosure of secret pacts, including the Sykes–Picot agreement, caused anxiety in the Cabinet.[91] These concerns no doubt contributed to the decision by the British to invade Russia in a bid to overthrow the Bolshevik government. Additionally of course the British had still not resolved, to their satisfaction, the issue of the future of Ireland and, as the secret 'Report of Revolutionary Organisations in the United Kingdom' revealed, there was considerable discontent inside Britain itself.[92]

The British, having excluded any direct representation to the negotiations by the delegation the First Palestinian Congress had nominated, insisted on the incorporation of the terms of the Balfour Declaration in the Peace Conference conclusions. Furthermore, the declaration's terms were incorporated in the Mandate system, which was confirmed at the San Remo Conference in April 1920, and Article 95 of the

Treaty of Sèvres in August that year determined its legal framework.[93] As a result of these processes the Balfour Declaration had been endorsed by the major international powers legitimating the Anglo-French moves to separate Palestine from the rest of the areas of the Arab Revolt as defined by Emir Faisal and clearly stated in the Damascus Protocol.

The refusal by the British or the French to consider the General Syrian Congress formulation, let alone accept the recommendations of the King–Crane Commission of 1919, was the prelude to the French invasion and overthrow of the newly established kingdom of Syria in July 1920. The attack was carried out with the full support of the British who took steps to dissuade 'the inhabitants of Transjordania' from giving any backing to those attempting to defeat the French.[94] The unified movement for Greater Syria faced a fundamental dilemma as a result of the British and French occupation and division of the two zones. The choice lay between continuing to struggle against the British and the French for a united Greater Syria *or* accepting the division of Syria and Palestine and thereafter fighting for self-determination in each area separately. Two of the most powerful nations in the world with the acquiescence of a third had resolved on a course of action, and even though the US administration, through its support for the King-Crane Commission, held a different view, it was either in no position to assert that alternative or chose not to.[95]

The White House position on negotiations at the Peace Conference was set out in the 26 November 1919 confidential 'Memorandum on the Policy of the United States relative to the Treaty with Turkey'. The memorandum had much in common with the findings of the King–Crane Commission recommendations, although the latter were not made public until 1922. Directly addressing the issue of the Sykes–Picot agreements, it asserted that, 'No Power except the United States can prevent the carrying into effect of those notorious "secret" agreements, which would lead certainly to war and probably to another world-war.'[96]

For their part the official British position, which had been drafted in the Hotel Astoria, Paris on 7 February 1919, presented the situation of Palestine like that of other regions in the area, stating that the 'population is mixed, and has not a common will'. The British therefore put forward the proposal that these 'problems' would be dealt with best by issuing the Mandate to 'a single Power'. In their official statement they made clear that their intention

was to ‘set up the framework of a Palestinian State, of which all the inhabitants of the country would be citizens, with equal rights, irrespective of nationality or creed’.[97] They further asserted that there would be proportional representation of the ‘Zionist Jews and the Arabs’ who, following training, ‘should be able, at the earliest possible moment, to govern themselves’.[98]

Following the war the British, in concert with their allies, received US backing to assert their political and military control over Palestine. The position taken by the British and the actions of the French left the Palestinian people with no other choice than to seek to establish the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination within the boundaries established under the Mandate.

THE YEAR OF CATASTROPHE: ‘AM AL-NAKBA 1920

The proposed separation of Palestine and Syria led to widespread protests and to ‘several major clashes between Arab tribes and the British garrisons along the Beisan–Samakh frontier with Syria’ which resulted in ‘heavy casualties on both sides’.[99] There had already been mass demonstrations. On 27 February 1920, 1,500 Palestinians demonstrated in Jerusalem, a further 2,000 in Jaffa and around 250 in Haifa against British policies.[100] On 4 April, following the Nebi Musa pilgrimage, violence broke out resulting in the deaths of five Jews and four Palestinians. On 24 April the *Jam’iyyat Fata Filastin* (the Palestinian Youth Society) ‘organised a military attack against a British unit in Samakh by over 2,000 armed Bedouins from the Hawran and Beisan Valley’.[101]

The inquiry under Major General P.C. Palin, which took place in Cairo, was essentially restricted to looking at the events ‘at and near Jerusalem … on 4 April’. The Commission sat for fifty days and heard 152 witnesses. The report contained Palin’s assessment of the general situation in which he made clear that in an operational sense, ‘The Zionists’ system of intelligence evidently knew a great deal more about the inner workings of the Administration than the corresponding department of the Administration did about the Zionists.’[102]

Palin’s overall judgement was that the Zionists ‘adopted the attitude of “We want the Jewish State and we won’t wait”, and they did not hesitate to avail themselves of every means open to them in this country and abroad; to

force the hand of an Administration bound to respect the "Status Quo" and to commit it, and thereby future Administrations to a policy not contemplated in the Balfour Declaration'. The report explained that:

> we are faced with a native population thoroughly exasperated by a sense of injustice and disappointed hopes, panic stricken as to their future and as to ninety per cent of their numbers in consequence bitterly hostile to the British administration. They are supported and played upon by every element in the Near East of an anti-British character and are ready to throw in their lot with any leader who will rise in revolt against Allied Authority. Already it is said that elaborate plans are being discussed and dates fixed for an insurrection which may involve the whole of Islam in the Near East.[103]

The report concluded that 'the causes of the alienation and exasperation of the feelings of the population of Palestine … [included an] inability to reconcile the Allies' declared policy of self-determination with the Balfour Declaration'.[104]

The report's findings focused on the events, stating that although there were a number of operational errors in the handling of the demonstration, the sense of duplicity felt by the Palestinian population coupled with a feeling that the British were predisposed to favour the Zionists was unjustified.[105] The judgement on the four days of rioting around the Nebi Musa pilgrimage by the Palin Commission, which was not released until many decades later, expressed the view that 'the Zionist Commission and the official Zionists by their impatience, indiscretion and attempts to force the hands of the Administration, are largely responsible for the present crisis'.[106]

In Damascus, tensions between Syrian, Palestinian and Iraqi groups surrounding Faisal led to irreconcilable splits, nullifying the prospect of a pan-Arabist alliance developing and hastening the adoption of discrete national perspectives. Faisal intervened to stop the publication of articles on the role of Zionism in the local press and prompted the formation of the Syrian National Party (*al-Hizb al-watani*), composed of leading notables, to further the aim of establishing Syria as a separate entity with himself as constitutional monarch.[107] Pressure built to dismiss Palestinians, and indeed Iraqis, from his government as members of the Syrian National Party, having felt marginalised by the 'foreigners', sought to carve out their own niche in the administration.[108]

Faisal, under threat from the French, capitulated and abandoned the Syrian Congress programme. The French swiftly intervened and suppressed any opposition, forcing Faisal to leave Damascus on 27 July 1920 to seek refuge in Haifa, where he was greeted by the newly arrived British high commissioner for Mandate Palestine.[109] The British were complicit in allowing the French to occupy Syria and opposed any attempt by Arab forces to resist. In so doing they isolated the Palestinian national struggle and imposed an interpretation of the McMahon–Hussein correspondence which contradicted the understanding held by Arab leaders. The goals of the Arab Revolt embodied in the Damascus Protocol, which summarised their hopes, were ignored.

The whole region was far from stable, as opposition to British rule in Iraq erupted into armed struggle in June 1920 resulting in thousands of Iraqi and British deaths and injuries.[110] Faced by an uprising that had inflicted significant defeats on the British and removed their control over the majority of the territory of Iraq, Churchill convened a conference in March 1921 in Cairo to assess the consequences and determine the response of the government.[111]

In a very short space of time the Palestinians had experienced a rejection of their demands expressed in the First and Third Congress decisions and reflected in the 1920 and 1921 demonstrations, and had witnessed the military defeat of nationalist movements in neighbouring areas by the French and then the British. Armed uprisings against far superior military forces ended in victory for the imperialist power. According to George Antonius, 'the year 1920 has an evil name in Arab annals: it is referred to as the Year of Catastrophe ('*Am al-Nakba*)'. So widespread was the anger at what was perceived to be a betrayal that 'There came a time when practically the whole of the Arab Rectangle was seething with discontent expressing itself in acts of violence.'[112] Whilst the expression of Palestinian opposition to British policies did not, at this moment, take the form of a national armed struggle as it had in Iraq and to a certain extent in Egypt, it did lead to mass popular expressions of opposition to their policies.

The arrival of Sir Herbert Samuel as the first high commissioner of Palestine, taking over from the military in July 1920, did not convince those opposed to the Zionist movement that Whitehall intended to treat the Arab

inhabitants equitably. Samuel himself had argued in January 1915 in a memorandum to the British Cabinet that '(w)idespread and deep-rooted in the Protestant world is a sympathy with the idea of restoring the Hebrew people to the land which was to be their inheritance, an intense interest in the fulfilment of the prophesies which have foretold it'.[113] His appointment had been the subject of debate in the House of Commons the day before he was due to leave to take up his new post. In Palestine itself, according to one account, his appointment 'was greeted with enthusiasm and unrealistic, almost messianic expectations by the Jews and corresponding dismay by the Arabs of Palestine'.[114]

It was perhaps in response to these demonstrations that Samuel moved to set up an advisory council.[115] The British hoped to demonstrate impartiality by the establishment of an institution composed of Palestinian and Jewish members. The advisory council, proposed by Sir Herbert Samuel in July 1920, was to be composed of the high commissioner together with eleven official members drawn from the Mandate authority's administrative departments. In addition there would be ten unofficial members consisting of four Muslims, three Christians and three Jews, all appointed by the high commissioner. It was severely criticised even by British political figures like Edwin Montagu, the secretary of state for India, on the basis of its unrepresentative character.[116] The British continued to propose the creation of administrative structures which, whilst containing Muslims, Christians and Jews, were constructed in such a way that complete unanimity was required in order to effect any proposal. The Palestinians or the Jewish representatives or the high commissioner could veto any proposal. Effectively this blocked majority opinions being expressed and handed disproportionate power to the Zionists and of course the British.

THE THIRD PALESTINIAN CONGRESS: DECEMBER 1920

It was against this backdrop of mounting expressions of popular anger that, following the banning of the Second Congress, the Third Palestinian Congress took place in Haifa from 13 to 19 December 1920. This exclusively Palestinian gathering represented a more concerted effort to coordinate the process of challenging British policies. Representatives from Haifa, Jerusalem, Nazareth, Nablus and a number of other towns gathered

in the city. They included members of the MCA, the Association of Christian Youth, the Association of Muslim Youth alongside members of *al-Nadi al-'Arabi* and *al-Muntada al-Adabi*. Local organisations or prominent local figures had endorsed the credentials of those attending.

Three items were prominent on the agenda of the Third Congress: '(a) the establishment of a national government (*hukuma wataniyya*); (b) the rejection of the idea of a Jewish National Home; (c) the organisation of the Palestinian Arab nationalist movement'. The Congress called for the creation of an elected body 'whose members would be chosen from the Arabic-speaking people who have been inhabiting Palestine until the outbreak of the War'.[117] This model echoed the sentiments of the First Congress and was based on the form of mandate operating in Transjordan and Mesopotamia, accepting overall British control. The idea of a Greater Syria was removed from their platform, although unification of Palestine and Syria at a later date was not ruled out. The document has been called by some the 'National Charter' of the Arabs.[118]

The Congress marked a decisive shift towards the establishment of a distinctly Palestinian national perspective. In composition the Congress continued to reflect the dominance of the *a'yan* families. The principal officers elected to the Executive Committee, and the secretary Jamal al-Husseini, all came from *a'yan* families. Even so, the authority of the Congress and its decisions were endorsed by a wide variety of leading Palestinians, including the representatives of MCAs, village leaders, Muslim scholars and leaders of a number of professions.[119] The Congress established the Palestinian Arab Executive Committee as the leadership of the movement and elected Musa Kazim al-Husseini as president with 'Aref Pasha al-Dajani as his deputy.[120] This represented an attempt to create an effective unified national leadership. Herbert Samuel, the high commissioner, who had been in the country less than six months, however dismissed its significance on the grounds that it was not a truly representative gathering.

Following the Third Congress, the Arab Executive agreed to send a deputation to meet with Winston Churchill, the secretary of state for the colonies, in Cairo where a conference on the Middle East was to be held early in the new year.[121] The British government was fully aware of the decisions of the Third Congress. Churchill refused to have any formal

discussions with the deputation in Cairo. When eventually they met, in Jerusalem on 28 March 1921, Musa Kazim read a paper explaining in detail the stance taken by the Congress.[122] The position of the 'Deputation of the Executive Committee of the Haifa Congress' is recorded in the *Report on Middle East Conference held in Cairo and Jerusalem* presented to the Cabinet. Churchill was at pains to point out that it was a courtesy meeting rather than an official one, insisting that they ought really to be addressing the high commissioner.[123]

Musa Kazim presented the positions of the Congress to Churchill in the form of a memorandum. The document drew the distinction between Britain occupying a country and owning it, and argued that whilst the Palestinians constituted a nation and a 'power', the Zionists were neither. The Balfour Declaration was, the memorandum argued, 'a contract between England and a collection of history, imagination and ideals existing only in the brains of Zionists who are a company, a commission but not a nation'. By contrast, it went on, the British had agreed a contract with King Hussein, the price of which had been paid when the King rose against the 'Turks'. The arguments mustered ranged from the 'legal', the 'historical', the 'moral', the 'economic', the cost to the British and the political consequences. Musa Kazim warned that Palestine might, as a result of Jewish immigration, become the springboard from which Bolshevism 'will quickly extend to other Arab peoples'.[124]

The memorandum summarised the positions of the Third Congress:

> For all the above reasons, we ask in the name of justice and right that
> -
> First: The principle of a National Home for the Jews be abolished.
> Second: A National Government be created, which shall be responsible to a Parliament elected by the Palestinian people who existed in Palestine before the war.
> Third: A stop be put to Jewish immigration until such a time as a National Government is formed.
> Fourth: Laws and regulations before the war be still carried out and all others framed after the British occupation be annulled, and no new laws be created until a National Government comes into being. Fifth: Palestine should not be separated from her sister States.[125]

Churchill began his reply in a conciliatory tone. 'I do not think you have any need to feel alarmed or troubled in your minds about the future', he said. He then proceeded to reaffirm that the Balfour Declaration embodied both British policy and his personal position. The British government, he

said, was committed to the 'establishment of a National Home for Jews in Palestine, and that inevitably involves the immigration of Jews into the country'.[126] Furthermore, he asserted the British had a right to determine the future of the country because of the numbers of British troops killed fighting the Turkish army, but that the completion of the task of establishing the national home for the Jews would take some time. 'The present form of government will continue for many years, and step by step we shall develop representative institutions leading up to full self-government. All of us here to-day will have passed away from the earth and also our children and our children's children before it is fully achieved.'[127]

He painted a picture of increased prosperity which would benefit all, leaving people to live the way they had been living, and asked the Palestinians to 'help' the British discharge the responsibility of the Mandate. Churchill's stance was to be the default position of the British government which, whenever the Balfour Declaration was challenged by Palestinians, and courtesies notwithstanding, offered nothing to Musa Kazim and the delegation. It is questionable whether Churchill ever had any intention of taking their concerns seriously. According to the Cabinet papers they were not the only group he met that day. Churchill was engaged in a series of meetings on 28 March which, in addition to meeting Musa Kazim's party, involved three separate conversations with Abdullah discussing Transjordan and later the same day a meeting with a deputation from the Jewish community.

The scale of the mobilisations in 1920 and 1921 demonstrated the depth of the opposition to the Mandate and the proposal for the creation of a Jewish national home in Palestine. The Third Congress stance was a reflection of and a stimulant to the development of widespread popular opposition against the growing process of colonisation. Dispossessed *fellahin* and those fearing the loss of their livelihoods in the countryside and in the towns expressed their opposition to the policies they felt threatened by. The British response to the clashes of May 1921 was to establish another commission, the Haycraft Commission, to investigate.

FOURTH PALESTINIAN CONGRESS AND THE HAYCRAFT COMMISSION REPORT, 1921

Less than six months after the Third Palestinian Congress the opposition to the British policies became evident with an outbreak of attacks on Zionist

settler colonies.[128] In proportion to the size of the population of Palestine these were on a large scale. The outbursts were triggered by a clash on 1 May between two socialist demonstrations, both organised by Jewish-led groupings. The authorised Zionist one was organised by *Ahdut Ha'avoda* (Unity of Labour), the other was unauthorised and led by *Miflagat Poalim Sozialistim* (the Socialist Labour Party). The fighting spread into nearby neighbourhoods and, over the next five days, resulted in a large numbers of casualties. Of those killed forty-seven were Jews and forty-eight Palestinians, whilst those injured were 146 and 73 respectively. The Arab casualties were largely due to British police action.[129] Following this new wave of popular mobilisations and fighting, on 7 May Sir Herbert Samuel established a commission under Sir Thomas Haycraft, chief justice of Palestine. The initial terms of reference directed the Haycraft Commission to 'inquire into the recent disturbances in the town and neighbourhood of Jaffa, and to report thereon'. Subsequently, on 23 May 1921, Samuel instructed the Commission to 'extend their inquiries and report further upon recent disturbances which have taken place in any part of the District of Jaffa or elsewhere in Palestine'.[130]

It was against this backdrop that the Fourth Palestinian Congress was convened in Jerusalem on 29 May 1921. The Congress decided to send a delegation to London but equivocated about its response to proposals from Syrian groups, like the *Istiqlal* (Independence) party, about coordinating Palestinian representations to the League of Nations with them. The Congress was focused on representing Palestinian views to the British and gave the concern for a Greater Syria a lower priority.

On 9 June, before the delegation had left Palestine and before Haycraft had reported, Churchill presented to the Cabinet an account of events by Captain C.D. Brunton of the General Staff Intelligence written on 13 May 1921. Brunton expressed the opinion that 'We are not faced by a simple outbreak of mob violence, in spite of pillage and other signs of participation of criminals and evil elements of the population. The troubles in Jaffa and other parts of the country are only the expressions of a deep-seated and widely spread popular resentment at the present British policy.' He concluded that 'If that policy is not modified the outbreaks of to-day may become a revolution to-morrow.'[131] Churchill was well aware of the gravity of the situation.

In the end the delegation left for London, via Egypt and Italy, on 19 July 1921. On 12 August they met with Churchill, who offered nothing new and encouraged them whilst there to meet with Chaim Weizmann to seek some form of conciliation with the Zionist Organisation. Musa Kazim al-Husseini made clear that they had come to speak with the British government and did not recognise Weizmann as having any locus in those discussions. After much persuasion, they agreed to meet him on 29 November. Despite Churchill's intentions, however, nothing of any significance came from the meetings.[132]

On 2 September 1921, the president of the delegation, Tawfiq Hamad, and the secretary, Shibli al-Jamal, wrote to the president of the League of Nations outlining their opposition to the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate proposals. The letter was a reasoned statement of the Palestinian case for self-determination pinpointing the central contradiction of the document. The authors identified the third paragraph of the Preface to the Mandate as the crux of the problem:

> wherein the question of a National Home for the Jews is discussed, the safeguarding of our civic and religious rights are mentioned, but there is not a word about our political rights; whilst in Art. 2 of this same document the political rights of the Jews in Palestine are plainly noted. This leads us to conclude that the words 'development in self-government' which occur therein are meant to apply to the Jews alone.[133]

The delegation well understood the intentions of the British and the role of the League of Nations in thwarting Palestinian national rights.

Following the meeting with Churchill and before that with Weizmann, the three members of the delegation – Tawfiq Hamad, Amin Bey al-Tamimi and Shibli al-Jamal – went to Geneva to meet with Syrian representatives. Following extensive discussions the group issued a joint statement to the League of Nations on 21 September, outlining demands on the future of Palestine, Syria and Lebanon. In essence this was an affirmation of the demands: for the right to self-determination of the three countries including the right to unify; for an end to the occupations by the British and the French; for the right to unite and elect a civilian government and for the rescinding of the Balfour Declaration.[134] Further attempts to develop this initiative were unsuccessful, however.

The Haycraft Commission, with its expanded remit, published its report in October 1921: *Palestine: Disturbances in May 1921. Reports of the*

Commission of Inquiry with Correspondence Relating Thereto.[135] The Commission looked in detail at some of the events of May. According to some, the refusal by the British earlier in the year to grant permission for demonstrations to take place when Churchill was in Palestine created tensions in the city.[136] According to the Commission's *Interim Report ... on the Khedera Raid*, the participants in those events came from a highly politicised environment. The people of the area were familiar with the terms of the Balfour Declaration. Newspapers and journals were widely available and those who were not able to read had the newspaper accounts translated and read to them. The report states that, in 'a small Moslem centre of this sort the people are more politically minded than in a small English country town, and the discussion of politics is their chief, if not their only, intellectual occupation'.[137]

The 'disturbances' had included the attack on the Jewish colony of Petach Tikvah, about seven miles north-east of Jaffa. The report suggested that when the attack took place on 5 May the numbers involved might have been anywhere from 1,000 to 2,000 people, some of who were armed and some on horseback. The following day the numbers involved declined to around 400, of whom about twenty were carrying rifles.[138] Troops and aircraft were used by the British to disperse the attackers. The Haycraft Report made clear that the sentiments recorded in the Palin Report about the previous year's demonstrations in Jerusalem were echoed at Petach Tikva. The Commission asserted that '[w]e consider that any anti-British feeling on the part of the Arabs that may have arisen in the country originates in their association of the Government with the furtherance of the policy of Zionism'.[139] The report noted that one of the main Palestinian grievances was that the Zionist Commission was given pre-eminence by the British and acted as an '*imperium in imperio* [*sic*]'.[140]

In dealing with the events the Haycraft Report commented on Palestinian perceptions about the increasingly discriminatory way in which British rule tended to favour the Zionists. Various aspects of the administration, including specifically the orders governing the sale of land, were viewed as advantageous to the Jewish settlers and discriminatory towards the Palestinians. In some cases this was identified as a consequence of the actions by partisan individuals within the administration, in others as a result of government policies or actions. Haycraft noted the displacement

of Arab workers by Jewish ones in the Public Works Department and on the railway; the tendency of a Jewish official to favour contracts being awarded to Jews; the tendency of Jewish traders to purchase only from Jewish businesses. The report identified this as systemic and not an occasional phenomenon, endorsing the view that sectarian practices impacted on the evolution of social groups, and in this instance the working class.

Attention was drawn to social differences between the communities giving examples of contrasts in the social mores of the newly arrived Jewish settlers which caused offence to the Palestinian community, suggesting that there was an insensitivity on the part of the 'immigrants' towards the indigenous population. There is evidence to suggest that these sentiments were, at least in the early years, shared by sections of the Mizrahi Jews who were also alienated by the behaviour of some of the Zionists.[141] However, the report recorded that, in the view of the authors, 'there is no inherent anti-Semitism in the country, racial or religious'.[142] The thrust of the Haycraft Report was that the Palestinian attacks on the Jewish colonies were a substitute for confronting the British.

The 'riots' or 'disturbances' reported on by Palin and Haycraft were presented as having a degree of spontaneity, arising out of particular incidents, but they clearly reflected underlying grievances held by large sections of the Palestinian population relating principally to the sale of land and the subsequent evictions. Haycraft drew a distinction between the urban and rural populations, identifying religious affiliation as constituting the closest bonds within society rather than social or class interests. His estimation of the Palestinian working class was quite blunt and infused with the imperialist and orientalist values of the day:

> The non-Jewish working people of Jaffa, while forming a compact community, differ in important respects from a European proletariat. There are a large number of boatmen, porters, artisans and labourers, who inhabit principally old Jaffa, Menshieh and 'Tin Town'. They are sociable, credulous, excitable, readily collecting in crowds at any moment when any cause of excitement arises; but with Moslems there is no class consciousness, as in a European proletariat, cutting through the bonds of race and religion. There are no classes in the European sense of the word.[143]

Leaving aside its tendentious tone, the comment confirms the more general point that the Palestinian working class was small and in the process of formation as dispossessed *fellahin* seeking employment gravitated towards

the towns.[144] The chief aspiration of many of those evicted remained to win back the lands they had worked. Initially this may have contributed to a degree of ambivalence towards severing all links with the land. Dispossessed *fellahin*, displaced to the urban areas, may not have been able to gain employment or the work on offer may have been unskilled, low-paid and with little guarantee of security of employment. The initial hope to return to the land may not have seemed unreasonable given that there were a variety of forms of landownership available.[145] In this context it is understandable that the organisations of workers which were established were more concerned with social welfare than the traditional trade union concerns of pay and conditions of employment. However, this pattern began to change through the 1920s.[146]

Presented to Parliament in October 1921, the Haycraft Report, according to High Commissioner Samuel, was viewed favourably by the Palestinians and adversely by the Zionist Commission.[147] Like the Palin document it focused on trying to record the sequence of events that had taken place, and the attitudes and behaviour of the participants. One proposal was to remove Dr Eder, acting chairman of the Zionist Commission, from his post because his views were at odds with the professed gradualist position of Weizmann and the Commission. The report summarised Eder's position as provocative: 'In his opinion there can only be one National Home in Palestine, and that a Jewish one, and no equality in the partnership between Jews and Arabs, but a Jewish predominance as soon as the numbers of that race are sufficiently increased.'[148] Despite the concerns expressed, the proposal to remove him was dropped on the grounds that a rapprochement was being negotiated in November 1921 between the Zionists and the Palestinian delegation in London.[149]

4

Social, Economic and Political Features of Palestinian Resistance

THE FATE OF BILAD AL-SHAM

The shifts which were taking place in Palestinian society were highly significant and were to bear on the formation and growth of social and political expression. Important economic and social changes had been taking place in Palestinian society through the second half of the nineteenth century. Palestine, a society developed over many centuries coping with the changes instigated by the Ottoman Empire, was now confronted by new challenges caused by the arrival of the British occupiers. These transitions, moving at different speeds, constituted the context in which the political response of the Palestinian people grew.

Palestine, alongside Syria and Mesopotamia, had been identified by the League of Nations as being in the 'Class A' category of Mandate territories. Class A countries were defined as those countries which were expected to achieve their independence once the designated Mandatory power decided that they could take responsibility for themselves. It was the Mandatory authority which determined whether a country might become self-governing. The British deliberately sought to hide their intentions. It was not until February 1920 that it was publicly acknowledged inside Palestine itself that the Balfour Declaration existed, and a further two years before the League of Nations formally confirmed Britain as the Mandatory authority.

The opposition to Balfour's proposals on Palestine was voiced by people in Britain and in addition by Britain's ally Emir Faisal. In a statement on the decisions of the San Remo Conference, forwarded by Allenby to the Cabinet on 13 May 1920, Faisal made clear his opposition to the Balfour proposal to establish a homeland for the Jews. He went further and, recalling his 25 October 1915 letter to McMahon, reaffirmed that his consistent position had been that Palestine was 'an inseparable part of Syria'. Faisal explained that he wished to 'safeguard the rights of the Jews in that country as much as the rights of the indigenous Arab inhabitants are safeguarded and to allow the same rights and privileges'.[1] Notwithstanding the growing evidence of staunch opposition to the Balfour Declaration, the Mandate authority, sometimes referred to as the government of Palestine, published an Immigration Ordinance on 26 August 1920 which stated that 'Entry into Palestine … shall be regulated by the High Commissioner'.[2] The British intended to override Palestinian desires to assert sovereignty over the country.

British and French imperialism, with all their collective resources, imposed a division on the area of *Bilad al-Sham* (Greater Syria) based on the Sykes–Picot agreement. Two of the most powerful countries in the world, having defeated Germany and its ally, the Ottoman Empire, could not be prevented by force at that time from imposing their collective will. The pan-Arabist aspiration for a unified *Bilad al-Sham* was frustrated and, to all intents and purposes, ceased to be a viable prospect. The programme agreed at the First Arab Congress in Damascus in July 1919, which had called for independence of the whole region, the establishment of a constitutional monarchy, the recognition of Emir Faisal as King of Syria and the designation of the USA as the Mandatory power, was brushed aside by the French with the assistance of the British. Syrian aspirations were crushed under the boots of French troops simultaneously wrecking the hopes of those who wanted 'Southern Syria', Palestine, to remain part of a unified Greater Syria.

THE ECONOMY IN PALESTINE

Political developments in Palestine were inextricably intertwined with those of the economy.[3] The vast majority of the Palestinian population worked on the land or in employment connected to agricultural production. Even

where industrialised urban production was developed, like the soap industry in Nablus, it was often dependent on the use of agricultural products.[4] Geared principally to domestic consumption, it was confronted with the advent of an occupying authority which increasingly invoked the terms of the Mandate to legitimate an intervention into the economy which skewed its development. Article 6 stated that:

> The Administration of Palestine, while ensuring that the rights and positions of other sections of the population are not prejudiced, shall facilitate Jewish immigration under suitable conditions and shall encourage, in co-operation with the Jewish Agency … close settlement by Jews on the land, including State lands and waste lands not required for public purposes.[5]

In order to achieve the 'close settlement by Jews on the land', the British administration resorted to using the changes introduced by the Ottoman Land Laws, facilitating the sale of land, which in turn triggered the dispossession of those who worked it.

The Palestinian merchants, landowners and the *fellahin*, had been used to working within a longstanding set of economic relationships which, in the main, had as its objective the production of surplus goods. As a consequence of the expansion of imperialist trade, the Ottoman Land Laws and the British occupation, those who owned the land, as well as those who worked on it, faced a sea change as land, products and labour were transformed into commodities. The expansion of agricultural production, which hitherto had been achieved by an increase in the area cultivated, was now pressured into intensifying production to extract the maximum profitability.

Produce, immoveable objects and animals were already, under Ottoman rule, the subjects of tax and the tithe system. Agriculture was heavily taxed, providing 60 per cent of the revenue. In order to meet this changing situation and increase productivity, agriculture required access to loans and investment but, until 1930, there was no Palestinian bank. Those Palestinians who made constant requests for investment in agriculture and the creation of educational institutions to improve productivity were ignored by the British.[6]

It was not until 1930 that a serious examination of the relationship between the development of the economy, the state of agriculture and the impact of immigration was made. The report, called simply *Palestine*, was

produced by Sir John Hope Simpson and aimed to set out a strategy for developing industry, agriculture and the economy more generally. Alongside other topics, he examined the role of *Keren Keyemeth* (the Jewish National Fund) which purchased land for the Jewish people and insisted on the use of Jewish labour. It stipulated that only Jews could hold the leases that they issued and only Jews could inherit the land. If that did not happen then that land had to be returned to the fund. The report concluded that 'the result of the purchase of land in Palestine by the Jewish National Fund has been that the land has been extra-territorialised'.[7] Once purchased by the Jewish National Fund the land could never be sold or leased to a Palestinian.

Agriculture at this time required credit if it was to develop. Interest charges on loans of 30 per cent were not uncommon and, as a result, the majority of *fellahin* lived in poverty and indebtedness. Hope Simpson estimated that 29.4 per cent of rural families in villages were landless. In one sub-district of Haifa an estimated 64.2 per cent of families faced legal actions and some faced imprisonment. Hope Simpson spelt out the plight of the *fellahin:*

> He has no capital for his farm. He is, on the contrary, heavily in debt. His rent is rising, he has to pay very heavy taxes, and the rate of interest on his loans is incredibly high. On the other hand, he is intelligent and hard-working, and pitifully anxious to improve his standard of cultivation and his standard of life. And very little has been done for him in the past.[8]

The British continuously placed obstacles in the way of the creation of a solution. Even Hope Simpson acknowledged that the low levels of productivity were not a consequence of some problem inherent to the Palestinian population. The answer to the land problem was intrinsically connected to the resolution of the national question.

One of the central features of British colonialism was the insistence that the colonised should pay for the costs incurred by the coloniser.[9] Palestine was no exception and the taxes levied contributed towards the costs of roads, railways and communication systems. However, many of the roads that were built serviced the Zionist settlements and British economic priorities rather than the majority population. Some of the major schemes, like the expansion of Haifa harbour, were undertaken specifically for imperial purposes.[10] Whilst the investment by the British disproportionately

favoured those sectors of the economy owned by the *Yishuv*, there was a corresponding imbalance when expenditure was to be reduced. When the Mandate authority imposed cutbacks, they tended to fall on the areas of education, health and other social amenities, disproportionately affecting the Palestinian population.

Whilst the majority of the population had little facility to raise loans at a reasonable cost in order to invest, few, if any, obstacles were placed in the way of the import of foreign capital. Investment from abroad was frequently provided interest free by Zionist supporters, and on occasion the British, assisted by supporting appeals from the Zionists for loans.[11] A series of ordinances encouraged Zionist banks, credit and cooperative societies.[12] Not having an extensive banking system placed Palestinian producers at a distinct disadvantage. One Colonial Office official summed up the situation: 'Palestine is as rigidly controlled as the most backward protectorate and has not the remotest vestige of sovereignty or independence'.[13] It was indicative of the relationship that imperial Britain made those under occupation pay for it and pay for their own defence.[14]

As the economy encountered the world market the commodities it produced faced increasing competition. Palestinian agricultural goods were vulnerable to price fluctuations and the periodic crises in the world economy. This became very evident during the 1929–31 crash in world prices for cereal crops.[15] Wheat on the domestic market fell from P£40 per ton in 1929 to P£6–7 in mid-1930. Olive oil fell in price from P£100 in April 1929 to P£40 per ton in June 1930.[16] Zionist settler producers were similarly affected by periodic economic crises but the consequences were partially mitigated by the changing patterns and character of immigration, which rose or fell depending on circumstances, and as a consequence of the inflow of new capital.[17]

Palestinian merchant capitalists whose enterprises were in transition from the practices and relationships dominant in the Ottoman period, were at a disadvantage in comparison to the resources available to the developing industrially oriented bourgeoisie of the *Yishuv*. Irfan Habib, in his analysis of India in the mid-nineteenth century, argues that during a period of colonialism it is possible to have a complex combination of 'modern or quasi-modern' relationships. Refusing to put a label on the 1857 Revolt, he argues that, 'To characterise the revolt as either feudal or bourgeois would

be unhistorical. The time for one was past, the time for the other had not yet come.'[18] The economy of Palestine could be similarly described as one caught between a set of relations, with both pre-capitalist and capitalist features, and the juggernaut of the *new*-imperialist dominated world market.[19] The areas of the economy in which the Palestinian capitalists were overwhelmingly based received little or no protection against the vicissitudes of the world market.

By contrast the concessions given to Pinhas Rutenberg, an industrialist born in the Ukraine, exemplified the preferential treatment afforded to Zionist entrepreneurs by the British High Commission.[20] Rutenberg was given exclusive rights to the use of water in the north of the country and for the creation of an electrical supply company that would provide the power for Palestine, with the exception of Jerusalem, and for Transjordan. In 1923, the ownership of the Palestine Electric Corporation Ltd. was organised in such a way as to ensure that it was always in the hands of a pro-Zionist holding company. In order to minimise opposition much of the preparation to establish the company, including discussions with the Brandeis-Mack group in the USA, was undertaken and remained in secret. The British further proposed protecting the scheme by prohibiting local municipalities from opening up contracts for competition.[21] Thus even if a Palestinian entrepreneur wished to invest in the field they were more or less prohibited by the Mandate authority from doing so.

In the financial sphere the Palestinian economy faced a similar monopolistic obstacle. In the decade following World War I, banking was dominated by foreign banks and credit cooperatives, leaving little space for local banks to develop.[22] Banking was under the influence of foreign-owned companies such as Barclays Bank (DC&O), the Ottoman Bank and the Banco di Roma. It was not until 1930 that a Palestinian bank was created. The economy was completely controlled by the British administration who, in 1926, centralised money regulation through the establishment of the Palestine Currency Board. The British government controlled the financial regulations with Palestine in the same way they did other colonies. The money used in Palestine was minted in London having been exchanged for money sent from Palestine. Initially the Egyptian pound was used, but this was later changed to sterling and 'the monetary reserves

of Palestine were held in Britain and so constituted a virtual loan to HMG [His Majesty's Government]'.[23]

Industry based on the imported capital tended to focus on production to meet the demands of the newly arrived settlers. In the mid-1920s those entering Palestine were mainly skilled workers or members of the middle classes, many bringing additional capital and an experience of industrial production. This combination facilitated the creation of new enterprises. The establishment of the Lodzia Textile Factory, founded by immigrants from Łódź, Poland, who had themselves worked in the textile industry, was an example of this phenomenon.[24] Additionally the trade, which had existed between the Palestinian community and the *Yishuv*, was disrupted by the boycott initiated in 1929. The increase in immigration led to the growth of the market based on Jewish consumers and eventually diminished the impact of the boycott.[25]

Rather than two distinct economies developing in isolation from each other along parallel lines, there was a single economy in which there existed competing and contradictory components. This contest was between those companies predominantly owned by members of the Palestinian community and those connected to the *Yishuv*.[26] The policies and actions adopted by the Mandate administration systematically favoured those enterprises associated with the *Yishuv*.

The areas in which capital imported to the *Yishuv* was invested were liable to develop higher rates of profitability. The prices of goods produced in these sectors therefore frequently undercut stock created by existing manufacturers because of the use of more technologically developed processes. This was the case with the production of soap, for example.[27] Hence, as with the *fellahin*, the Palestinian landowning classes, manufacturers, merchants and other members of the growing capitalist class were at a disadvantage. This problem was made worse by the actions of the Mandate administration. These economic factors had political consequences as the social forces, which might contribute to the shaping of nationalist aspirations, were distorted by the manner in which the economy developed. This economic dislocation further contributed to the political splits within the Palestinian bodies which had such a bearing on the functioning of the leaderships of the struggle for self-determination.[28]

The majority of Palestinian capitalists were merchants connected to agriculture. Their capacity to expand their businesses was conditional on the size of harvests, the exercise of controls over imports and exports and the price of their goods on the world market. The British Mandate administration was able to control some of these features, influencing in a negative way the ability of these producers to expand their enterprises.[29] The economic policies pursued by the British tended to privilege those undertakings predominantly owned by capitalists within the *Yishuv* and discriminated against those areas of activity involving the Palestinian capitalist class.

THE PALESTINIAN WORKING CLASS AND THE HISTADRUT

Those *fellahin* who were evicted from their lands gravitated towards the cities and towns to find employment: 'In Jaffa, most of the street cleaners were ex-villagers; the Arab Cigarette and Tobacco Company in Nazareth reported that most of its workers were also of village origin.'[30] If they did find work their levels of pay were far less than Jewish women workers who themselves received less than their male counterparts. Although a relatively new social force, the Palestinian working class, as the Palin Commission Report noted, challenged the discriminatory practices of the Zionist employers and the Mandate administration from the outset. The Haycraft Commission Report of 1920 noted that the Palestinian workers complained that the employment of Jewish workers by the Public Works Department was 'out of all proportion to the Jewish population of the country'.[31] This newly forming working class faced the considerable challenge of an economic environment shaped by the dual exigencies of British imperialism and Zionist colonialism.

Even before World War I, workers within the *Yishuv* had begun to organise, and this accelerated during the British occupation of Palestine. The *Histadrut* (General Organisation of Workers in the Land of Israel), growing out of organisations such as the Union of Agricultural workers set up in 1911, was established by Jewish workers in 1920 in Haifa. It became the main body in the *Yishuv* through which debates on policies of employment took place. By early 1931 the *Histadrut* had 'more than 30,000 members, 18,781 in cities (including the industrial enterprises in Nahara'im, Atlit, and the Dead Sea area), 7,783 in *moshavot* [towns or

settlements], and 3,496 in collective settlements' constituting 75 per cent of workers as a whole.[32] The organisation was always a political project aimed at the incorporation of Jewish workers into the national enterprise. It was never simply a trade union preoccupied with the wages and conditions of all employees irrespective of nationality or religion. In the view of one of its founding figures, David Ben-Gurion, the *Histadrut* was a vehicle for achieving the objective of creating a Jewish state in Palestine, and for him the 'building of a Jewish state requires first the creation of a Jewish majority in the country … [and] the only person who can bring us such a majority is the Jewish worker in Eretz Israel'.[33]

The *Histadrut* was a central part of the project seeking to hegemonise the political allegiance of Jewish workers to the Zionist project. It was an arm of the colonial settler endeavour which won the adherence of Jewish workers, including those newly arrived, by its increasing capacity to secure employment. It did so largely by its increasing capacity to exclude Palestinian workers from jobs in enterprises owned by Jewish employers and by ensuring that materially, through discriminatory pay rates, the Jewish workers received preferential treatment. The Mandate authorities fully cooperated in ensuring that this happened, setting different rates of pay through the Wages Commission in 1928, for example – for 'unskilled labor: Arab rural, 120–150 mils a day; Arab urban, 140–170; Jewish non-union, 150–300; and Jewish union, 280–300'.[34] This was also typical of colonialist practices elsewhere in the British Empire.[35] The Mandate authority cooperated with and reinforced the socially fragmenting initiatives of the *Histadrut*.

The political divisions, which developed within the *Yishuv* also occurred within the trade unions and socialist parties, mirroring the splits within the international socialist movements between those who adopted a nationalist perspective in World War I and those who, like the Bolsheviks, retained an internationalist orientation. The *Histadrut* adopted the Zionist policy of *kibush haavoda* (conquest of labour), which had both a social and a political impact in creating divisions between Jewish and Palestinian workers. Although there was opposition within the *Histadrut* on this issue, those political factions led by David Ben-Gurion, arguing for the exclusion of Palestinian workers from the Zionist trade unions, won the majority. This

policy had major implications affecting the formation of both trade union and political organisations.[36]

Jewish employers were encouraged, and in some cases coerced, into adopting these exclusionary practices. The policy of *avoda ivrit* (Hebrew labour) was pursued vigorously, resulting in almost complete segregation in certain industries between Palestinian and Jewish workers, the latter being employed on more favourable terms in the same workplace. This policy was operated by some of the largest companies in Palestine, including the Shemen Oil Company and the Société des Grand Moulins. The cement factory, owned by the Nesher Company, which wished to trade with companies in neighbouring Arab countries was concerned lest discriminatory employment policies adversely affected their ability to do so, and consequently did not put the *avoda ivrit* policy into practice.[37] As a result of these developments, in the middle of the 1920s, having experienced the consequences of *kibush haavoda* and the corporatist Zionism of the *Histadrut*, the dispossessed *fellahin* who found work together with the rest of the Palestinian working class were obliged to develop organisations and a trade union movement which was, as a result, composed only of Palestinians.[38]

When it came to matters of industrial disputes between employers and employees, the Mandate administration in 1924 viewed the issue as one to be resolved within the *Yishuv* since the majority of the workers and the employers involved were Jewish. The British administration effectively refused to intervene, leaving any settlement of disputes to the *Histadrut* and the employers to resolve with the occasional intervention of the Zionist Executive. Furthermore, the British succumbed to the argument that when capital for a project was provided from the settler community, preference should be given to the employment of Jewish workers. Typical of this was the agreement made between the Zionist Executive and the administration to construct a road linking settler colonies.[39] Here again the actions of the Mandate authority reinforced the division of society promoted by the pro-Zionist *Histadrut*.

Despite the application of the policy of *avoda ivrit* this did not always mean a complete segregation between Palestinian and Jewish workers. There were cases where both groups were employed. Palestinian workers were present in a variety of industries, including in the railways and in other

productive sectors where they worked alongside Jewish workers. Nevertheless they were still were excluded from the trade union bodies. There were some small-scale attempts to create united bodies but these were discouraged or suppressed by the *Histadrut*.[40] In the early 1920s there was an attempt to establish a joint Arab-Jewish organisation in a number of workplaces, most notably amongst the railway workers, but this soon ended. A group of Palestinian workers joined the Union of Railway, Postal and Telegraph Workers, but disillusioned by the lack of support shown from their Jewish co-workers, they left after a few months and began the process which led to the establishment of the Palestinian Arab Workers Society (PAWS).[41]

Even when workers from both communities took part in joint industrial action to secure their demands this did not guarantee that their unity would be sustained. In a dispute with the employer that broke out during the building of the Nesher Cement Factory at Haifa, 200 Jewish workers sought the support of the eighty Egyptian workers employed by the company. Together they won a favourable settlement but the *Histadrut* successfully pressurised its members to return to work and abandon the Egyptian workers. The trade union solidarity which the Egyptian workers demonstrated was not reciprocated by the *Histadrut* members when they won their objectives.[42] In these circumstances, Palestinian workers therefore felt forced to establish their own organisation because of the segregationist political character of the *Histadrut* which from the outset only permitted Jewish workers to become members. This stance operated even in circumstances when members of the two communities were working in the same workplace and some degree of cooperation was taking place.

Trade unions invariably develop in urban areas where there is a strong concentration of workers. PAWS was established in 1925 in Haifa, at the time a major industrial port, a centre of commerce and already the centre of trade union activity. Whilst PAWS was an important organisational step forward, the critical challenge to the Palestinian working class arose from the policies adopted by the leaders of the Jewish working class, which grew as immigration increased and the newly arrived colonists gravitated towards the burgeoning coastal cities.

These new groups of Jewish workers often brought a range of skills which, to a large extent, placed them in a more advantageous position for employment. In addition they often had both political and organising experience. 'About one-third (of Jewish immigrants) had been members of the different Zionist workers' parties while still in Europe'.[43] Critically of course, when they arrived they benefitted from the discriminatory practices which gave them preferential access to employment, as Jewish employers were encouraged not to employ non-Jewish staff. The political character of the Zionist colonisation impacted on the growth of the Palestinian working class as a social group, excluding them from employment in areas critical to economic development and pushing them towards more precarious and marginalised jobs with less capacity to influence the terms and conditions of employment. In such circumstances it was also less likely that effective trade union organisation would take place.

Meanwhile, inside the *Histadrut* there was opposition to the growth of independent Palestinian trade unions such as PAWS, and steps were initiated to finance a separate Palestinian organisation under Zionist influence. The dominant political current amongst the Jewish workers within the *Histadrut* was *Ahdut Ha'avoda* (Unity of Labour), which opposed cooperation between Palestinian and Jewish workers. This pattern of seeking to divide Palestinians was a recurrent practice when the organisations they established began to voice nationalist sentiments. However, the formation of trade unions was beset not only by the problems created by the Zionists but was inhibited by the resistance of some sections of the Palestinian community. This pattern continued through to the 1930s when strong opposition was voiced against the influence of the Communist Party in PAWS, and supporters of the Mufti and the oppositionists 'attempted to set up rival unions whose aims and activities were strictly partisan and political'.[44]

The composition of the new trade union organisation continued to reflect its origins in the coastal cities and amongst certain sectors such as the railway workers. However, there was a period of relative inactivity in relation to building trade unions, between the founding of PAWS in 1925 and the calling of the Congress in 1930.[45] When the Congress was convened, its agenda focused on both the traditional concerns of employment, wages and conditions together with opposition to Zionism and

immigration. PAWS saw these issues as inextricably linked and, in contrast to the *Histadrut*, called for a proportionate distribution of jobs in the government spheres of employment based on the relative sizes of the two communities; it also called for Palestinian independence. This placed it clearly at odds with the *Histadrut*.

In the early 1920s the traditions and practices of political and trade union organisation, which some of the newly arrived European Jewish socialists were familiar with, had no organic roots in the nascent Palestinian working class.[46] The predominantly Jewish-led communist and socialist organisations that did seek to win political backing from the Palestinian working class faced the dual obstacles of having few Palestinian members to argue the case and opposition from within the *Yishuv* by other political groups.[47]

To some extent the Jewish working class was also in the process of formation since there were not necessarily jobs available for newly arrived immigrants. Whilst the industrial enterprises and settlements which had sprung up in the pre-occupation period had been based on employers seeking the biggest return for the smallest investment, much of the newer post-war capital coming into Palestine was already earmarked as part of the Zionist national project and under much more centralised management by the Zionist Commission. 'Zionist national institutions were directly responsible for about 20% of all Jewish investment in the inter-war years, including land purchases.' The *Histadrut* itself was a major investor.[48] As a result of these factors the enterprises that were established utilised the policy of *kibush haavoda* to recruit staff from the beginning. This partisan employment process had the concomitant effect that the job opportunities for Palestinians were restricted, with the inevitable consequence that the working class grew more slowly and their employment was much more precarious.[49] The ideology which informed the structures created by the Jewish workers was entirely in concert with the nationalist aspirations of Zionism. The net result was, *de facto*, one of collaboration between two major evolving social forces of the *Yishuv*, the bourgeoisie and the working class.[50]

Prior to the Mandate there were no joint Palestinian Arab-Jewish trade union or political organisations. The *Histadrut* was the dominant organisation of workers in the *Yishuv*. Over 4,000 people took part in the

election of its delegates to the founding congress. By 1923 it had a sick fund, consumers and marketing organisations, a builders' cooperative and a bank. The *Histadrut* was a quasi-state institution playing a welfare role, providing for the needs of newly arrived settlers, and it was itself a large employer in the building and construction sector.[51] Additionally it founded the *Haganah*, a paramilitary organisation initially acting as guards to prevent colonies being attacked and eventually evolving into the Israeli army. Acting simultaneously as the employer and the representative of employees was one characteristic differentiating it from conventional trade unions.[52]

Confronted by the discriminatory practices of both the imperial power and the colonial settlers, the Palestinian workers faced a considerable challenge to defend their own employment let alone improve their pay and conditions of work. The growth of the young Palestinian working class was inhibited from the outset and consequently took some time to organise and become a political force in society.

WOMEN AND PALESTINIAN POLITICS

In the nineteenth century, a majority of women within Palestinian society had played a domestic role working in the household, as carers for children and undertaking work in the home.[53] Women in poorer rural households, however, tended also to work in the fields. The changing economic, political and social situation had begun to challenge that dominant tradition and contributed to women becoming more active in the public political sphere: 'There are reports that, as early as the late nineteenth century, women joined with men in strongly and even violently resisting Zionist settlement, participating in protests against Jewish immigration in the countryside in 1884 in Affula.'[54] This evidence challenges the view that women's political activity was exclusively confined to the middle class, unless a very narrow definition of what constitutes political activity is applied. Whilst it was true that the Arab Women's Committee was established in 1929, principally by women from the families of male *a'yan* involved in national politics, it clearly succeeded in reaching out to middle class women and, through its commitment to more extensive social work, to make contact with women in other social groups.[55]

From the letters pages and content of the newspapers, there is evidence of women's involvement in social and political life, including involvement in activities such as political fundraising.[56] There were women's organisations taking part in welfare activity or education in Jerusalem, Jaffa and Haifa in the 1920s, although often led by the wives of leaders of the main political bodies. A women's society in Jerusalem, for example, was active in 1931 distributing 'food to poor families, and [sending] nurses to help mothers learn proper sanitation methods and care for their children'.[57] However, bodies like the Executive Committee of the Women's Congress also issued more overtly political statements on 'Jewish immigration, land buying, and alleged educational and economic discrimination'. Despite the fact that many of the women involved in these activities were the wives of members of differing political factions, they worked together in the same organisations and did not replicate the divisions found in the male-led bodies.[58]

The First Arab Women's Congress took place in Jerusalem in October 1929 and was attended by over 200 women from both the Muslim and the Christian communities. The movement which laid the basis for the Congress, 'evolved from a complex matrix of charitable, reformist, feminist, and nationalist impetuses, which overlapped and informed the nature of women's initial organisational endeavours'.[59] The Congress passed three motions calling for the 'abrogation of the Balfour Declaration, an assertion of Palestine's rights to a national government with representation for all communities in proportion to their numbers, and the development of Palestinian industries'. Additionally they made the specific proposal that land should only be bought from the Jews and that every other form of transaction should be prohibited. They publicised their political positions by means of a closed motorcar procession through Jerusalem, although this was not repeated in 1933 when women joined protest rallies in the same city and Jaffa.[60]

In 1933 the militancy of the women was even recognised by the high commissioner, Sir Arthur Grenfell Wauchope, who, writing of an action in Jerusalem, expressed concern that a 'new and disquieting feature of this demonstration was the prominent part taken by women of good family as well as others … They did not hesitate to join in assaults on the Police and were conspicuous in urging their menfolk to further efforts.'[61] Wauchope

was clearly shocked by these developments but they were further evidence of the broadening of political engagement within the Palestinian community.

THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA

Although the population at the start of the twentieth century was predominantly rural and distributed in towns and villages across Palestine, social changes led to a progressive growth of the urban population and with it there emerged a lively press. Literacy rates were generally low under Ottoman rule. There were not sufficient schools in Palestine, even though across the region there were 956 'education establishments … most of which were primary and elementary schools'.[62] Although there had been an expansion of missionary schools there were not enough schools to meet the needs of the population. A government census on literacy, published in 1932, indicated that literacy rates for all Palestinians stood at 25 per cent for males and 3 per cent for females, and it seems reasonable to assume that the figures for the pre-Mandate period would have been similar.[63] Amidst those who were literate there were significant differences between social groups, which to some extent were reflected in the figures for different religious communities. Amongst Christians the figures for male and female literacy were 72 per cent and 44 per cent respectively, and amongst Jews the comparable figures were 93 per cent and 73 per cent.[64] Given the distributions of the three communities, this probably reflected, in addition, a divide between urban and rural communities.

The potential readership of the press before World War I, although still limited in numbers, had been expanding.[65] Whilst literacy rates were relatively low, access to literature was possible through sources such as 'the town café and village guesthouse [which] provided social centers where someone would read articles from newspapers and the men would discuss political affairs'.[66] A number of libraries opened at the turn of the century.[67] In some factories 'newspaper breaks' took place.[68] At least one publisher sent a copy of their newspaper to all the villages in their surrounding areas. The numbers of pupils in the 'Arab Public System–Government Schools' increased by approximately 150 per cent between 1920 and 1930 and the number of teachers nearly doubled.[69] This phenomenon, alongside other

informal patterns of communication, undoubtedly led to the dissemination of ideas more widely than the immediate readerships.

Newspapers began to flourish in the first years of the twentieth century, and in 1908 fifteen newspapers were printed in Palestine. One of these papers, founded in December 1908, was the very influential weekly *al-Karmil*, published in Haifa by the owner and editor Najib Nassar. Nassar himself was a Palestinian Christian and committed anti-Zionist. The paper's editorials conveyed his point of view. Its nationalistic perspective, as expressed in a March 1909 column, can be summarised as supporting 'the just demands of the people … [serving] the trader, the craftsman, and the *fallah*, and all other sectors of the population'.[70] The Ottoman authorities, concerned by its positions, closed it down in 1914 because of its critical attitude towards the government. The paper was revived after the end of Ottoman rule and continued to be published throughout the Mandate era into the 1940s.

From 1911 onwards, *al-Karmil* was rivalled by the Jaffa-based *Filastin* which championed the anti-Zionist cause. Taking up the interests of the rural population threatened by eviction as a result of the land purchases, the articles of both papers were reprinted in other local newspapers and in nationally distributed papers in Damascus, Beirut and Cairo.[71] *Filastin* in particular switched from a focus on the threats posed by Zionism and Jewish immigration to a concern for the plight of the *fellahin*, whose families faced dispossession and displacement from the land. This sharpening of focus was matched by an increasing number of articles shifting attention from the failures of the Ottoman rulers in restricting the growing colonisation to the longer term threat posed by the Zionist settlers.[72] Undoubtedly the newspapers published elsewhere in Cairo, Beirut, Damascus and Istanbul were influential in developing an understanding of the significance of Zionism not only for Palestine but also for the region.[73]

These papers, as with the political organisations that began to develop, frequently reflected the social origins and interests of their owners. In the early 1930s, the newspaper *Filastin* was owned by the al-Issa family whose wealth was based on the citrus industry. It was explicitly anti-communist and anti-trade union, opposing workers' strikes to improve wages or conditions. Whilst they supported the anti-Zionism regularly implicit in the

actions of those striking, the paper was reluctant to endorse any actions which might jeopardise profits. The wider implication of the paper's position was that Palestinian notables in the process of undergoing embourgeoisement were not about to sacrifice their profits for the national cause. Employer interests superseded nationalist aspirations. The social background of the owners was often reflected in the editorial line expressed by these newspapers with regard to Zionism. Rashid Khalidi has suggested that, from the evidence available so far, the stance adopted by the pre-war press was less influenced by their owners' religious allegiance than by their attitudes towards the CUP government in Constantinople. Those opposed to the rulers tended to be more anti-Zionist than those who favoured unity with the Ottoman Empire.[74]

Evidence of the interconnections between the press and political organisations can be found throughout the British Mandate, with papers promoting the standpoints of their proprietors. Some, like Boulus Shihada who owned *Mir'at al-Sharq* and 'Issa al-Issa who edited *Filastin*, for example, were members of important political bodies such as the Arab Executive Committee and intervened to ensure that their opinions were directly reflected in their papers. However, these connections did not necessarily mean that those political organisations were always exempt from criticism within the columns of the papers they owned. Writing in *al-Karmil* on 14 February 1926, Sheifh As'ad al-Shuqari said:

> *S*ince the start of British occupation until the present day I have not been aware of the existence of a real National Movement [*Haraka wataniyya haqiqiyya*]. The prominent and less prominent members of the National Movement, Muslim, Christian and Druze, welcomed the British occupation, although, their leaders were clearly aware that this occupation carried the attendant 'gift' of a national home for the Jews in Palestine. The British military and administrative staff began their occupation with the act of every wise conqueror, by granting positions to the sons of prominent families who were infatuated with them, in order to win their sympathy, support and various services.[75]

The link between the press and political bodies did not escape the notice of the Mandate authorities. In a report submitted to the Duke of Devonshire, secretary of state for the colonies, dated 8 December 1922, High Commissioner Herbert Samuel remarked favourably on the considerable support that 'what has come to be called the Moderate Party' had in the press.[76] At times the authorities moved to impose censorship because of a paper's anti-Mandate views and from time to time closed down the press

altogether. A Secret Intelligence Report, presented to the Cabinet in November 1929, makes clear that the press was regarded as an important influence on the course of events taking place. 'The Arab press continues to be very inflammatory, in particular a paper which is now for the first time published in English'.[77] The paper was unnamed, but *al-Wihda al-'Arabiyya*, which published in both Arabic and English from December 1933 onwards, was censored by the British on charges of incitement in 1935.[78]

Sections of the press acted as explicit political organisers. *Al-Karmil* sought to intervene in the political process, calling for the organisation of popular opposition to Zionism. Others, such as *al-Mufid*, linked to *al-Fatat* the Arab nationalist secret society, were directly connected to specific nascent political organisations.[79] There was of course a long tradition linking the development of the press with the emergence of political bodies and the whole process of political organisation. In 1905, Najib 'Azuri who had founded the *Ligue de la Patrie Arabe* in Paris, published *Le Reveil de la Nation Arabe*, 'which predicted a momentous conflict between Zionism and Arab nationalism'.[80] In 1907 he went on to publish a monthly review entitled *l'Indépendance Arabe*.[81]

Newspapers expressing concern about Zionism could be found not only in other parts of the Arab world such as Cairo, Damascus and Beirut but even in Istanbul where *al-Hadera* was published.[82] There was an amount of direct and indirect collaboration between the sections of the press. The Haifa and Jaffa papers frequently used articles published elsewhere in the Arab world because there was a sense that the decisions of the World Zionist Organisation constituted a challenge not only to Palestine but to the Arab world in general.[83] Even after the imposition of the French Mandate, newspapers in Damascus were still publishing stories which concerned the British government. A letter from P.Z. Cox, the British high commissioner in Baghdad, presented by Winston Churchill to the Cabinet in October 1921, complained bitterly of the 'anti-British propaganda … still published in Syria … [as] evidenced by the article published in "Muqtabas" [on] 24 August 1921', and of articles in the French-language monthly *L'Action Assyro-Chaldeénne* published in Beirut.[84] Undoubtedly Cox's sensitivities to the sentiments expressed in the press had been sharpened by the revolt against the British which had taken place a year earlier.

Haycraft made the point that the local community in Palestine was also well aware of material written by the Zionists which was published abroad. He stressed that, 'It is important that it should be realised that what is written on the subject of Zionism by Zionists and their sympathisers in Europe is read and discussed by Palestinian Arabs, not only in the towns, but in country districts.' He instanced witnesses appearing before the Commission, quoting books written a few years earlier and articles in the Jewish Chronicle of 20 May 1921 which called for measures to be taken which would give 'Jews … those rights and privileges in Palestine which shall enable Jews to make it as Jewish as England is English, or as Canada is Canadian'.[85]

The political response was not confined to the publication of newspaper articles. Books were published on the issue of Palestine, the Mandate and Zionism. Cultural events expressed political ideas, including a January 1920 production of a play in Nablus called *The Ruin of Palestine*, staged by *al-Nadi al-'Arabi*, which recounts a story of two Arabs losing their property to a 'young flirtatious Jewess'. Two books written by Muhammad Izzat Darwazah and Isa al-Sifri were printed in Jaffa in 1929, followed by further publications in the mid-1930s.[86] These activities were complemented by initiatives setting up schools and clinics for the poor and engaging in discussion on a wide range of topics including literature.[87] This burgeoning of cultural activity acted as a counterweight to the atomising impact of the social changes which Palestinians experienced. Political, social and cultural activities were interwoven and had an effect on other areas of life.

RELIGION AND POLITICS IN PALESTINE

Palestinian expressions of political opinion were often entwined with religion. This was not a phenomenon unique to Palestinian political life of course.[88] The Ottoman Empire claimed its status as the Caliphate and with it the position of leader of the Sunni Muslim community worldwide. The initial debate about Palestinian political identity was in part shaped by its status. Those who wanted to see the Ottoman Empire retain this position tended towards a pan-Islamist point of view. In response to the more secular politics of the CUP and its nationalistic Turkification of the Ottoman Empire at the beginning of the twentieth century, pan-Islamism was superseded by a pan-Arabism and subsequently by Arab nationalism.

Nevertheless throughout this period, the religious affiliations of the people both of Greater Syria and then Palestine, to some extent shaped the struggle for self-determination in these countries.

As has already been noted, religious background was frequently an indicator of social class. Certainly the religious affiliations of leading political figures, both Muslim and Christian, influenced the development and expression of their ideas about nationalism. Although a minority within the community, Palestinian Christians, to some extent because of their social background, played an influential role in the development of its politics. Efforts were made both by the Palestinian nationalists and the British to gain favour with the various religious groups. The name of one of the foremost Palestinian organisations, the Muslim Christian Association, both reflected its composition as well as being an expression of a desire for unity between the two principal Palestinian religious communities.[89]

Political ideas were also spread through places of worship by religious leaders who used their positions of authority to promote them: 'In 1925 a Muslim religious authority issued, for the first time, a *fatwa* (Muslim legal ruling) forbidding land sales to Jews.'[90] The ruling was published in the press. Although the *fatwa* did not appear to have much influence at the time it was indicative of an attempt to mobilise religious allegiance in support of political campaigns.[91] From the mid-1920s onwards, for example, this linkage between religion and politics could be seen embodied in a figure like Izz al-Din al-Qassam. A popular imam, he has been described as 'a man of immense religious learning … an eloquent orator … an ardent Muslim and a patriot'.[92] He was politically active from the early 1920s and would come to play a significant political role, especially in the early 1930s.

The British were aware of the importance of religion in Palestinian society and paid attention to it. Whilst religion could be invoked as a unifying mobiliser, it also had the potential to be used to divide communities. The British were aware of this from their experiences in India and Ireland of course. By the judicious use of patronage, the British sought to utilise confessional politics to exploit divisions, especially within the Muslim community. Choosing a person from one *a'yan* family rather than another might, by elevating one group to pre-eminence, divide the community by winning the favours of one whilst marginalising those deemed more problematic. The tactic of divide and rule was not only used

to advantage one religious group against another but at times also to divide one group from their co-religionists.

Throughout Ottoman rule a number of posts related to the administration of the Sharia courts were appointed or approved by Constantinople. Under the terms of the Mandate occupation the authority for determining who should hold such posts was assumed by the British. They enhanced the status of the Mufti of Jerusalem by designating the position as having jurisdiction over the whole of Palestine. On 8 May 1921, in contravention of established practices for the election, they appointed al-Hajj Amin al-Husseini as the Grand Mufti.[93] Al-Husseini was chosen by the British over three other candidates who, under the then existing procedures, should have had priority. In doing so the British made a deliberate choice both to intervene in the processes and structures of the Sharia courts and, quite specifically, to appoint someone who was likely to be more favourably disposed towards them.

The British saw these questions within a global picture and were becoming more and more anxious about the consolidation of nationalist consciousness by Muslims across the empire, and especially in India. This concern was linked to their growing awareness of the support expressed by the Bolsheviks for the right to self-determination of states within the former Tsarist Empire whose populations were predominantly Muslim: 'The Islamic consciousness, like the European Labour Movement, is a growing international force.'[94] In the eyes of the author of the *Memorandum on The Formula of 'Self-determination of Peoples' and the Moslem World*, there were 'many points in common between the Russian Moslem Movement and the Indian – the most important being an extreme sensitiveness to the fate of Moslems in other countries'.[95]

From the date of his arrival, High Commissioner Herbert Samuel was keen to establish an authoritative body representing the Muslim community with which the British could work officially.[96] On 9 January 1922 the Supreme Muslim Council was inaugurated and granted a degree of autonomy by the Mandate authority to administer Sharia courts and, perhaps as a response to the pressures from the May 1921 riots, choose the muftis who advised them.[97] In its composition, leadership and formation, the Council replicated the existing traditional religious and social structures and the influence of the *a'yan*. The initial contest for leading positions

reflected the rivalry between the prominent families, with al-Hajj Amin al-Husseini and Raghib al-Nashashibi for the post of *Ra'is al-Ulama*. The holder of this position would become the permanent president of the Supreme Muslim Council alongside four other councillors. By imposing al-Hajj Amin al-Husseini in the post, the British gave him a privileged status in relation to the Mandate administration. This enhanced his standing amongst the Muslim community, giving him an authority through which he too could exercise patronage and political influence. Whilst the powers to administer Sharia courts and choose the muftis who would advise them were devolved to the Council, those appointed were paid by the Mandate authority.

The British authorities faced a political challenge from the Christian community as well as the majority Muslim one. From the outset members of the Christian community were involved in the establishment of political bodies and their views were reflected in the columns of the papers they owned.[98] According to one report, Christian opposition to the appointment of Herbert Samuel as high commissioner was 'even more bitter than the Moslems'.[99] Samuel himself was a little more sanguine about it, expressing the view, in 1922, that the attitudes of the Christian communities tended to change depending on political developments. He was of the opinion that their anti-British government and anti-Zionist positions lessened as a consequence of their perception that there was a growth in the influence of an Islamic politics.[100] Where differences emerged between leading Christian political figures and Muslim leaders they were no greater or smaller than those within the Muslim community, and more often than not reflected their respective social and economic interests rather than a confessional divide.

THE PALESTINIAN DELEGATION, CHURCHILL'S WHITE PAPER AND THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

In August 1921, the delegation sent by the Fourth Congress met with Churchill in London. He confirmed at the meeting that the British were not prepared to change their stance and that they intended to implement the Mandate on the basis of their interpretation of the Balfour Declaration.[101] In the eyes of Churchill, that had been resolved and was not open for negotiation. However, the British persuaded the delegation to remain in

London on the pretext that the discussions would be beneficial.[102] A series of meetings took place but no progress was made on any substantive question. At a dinner on 25 November, Churchill proposed that the delegation meet with Chaim Weizmann. Despite all of this they detected no significant change in British attitudes. In February 1922, Churchill attempted to entice the delegation into supporting his proposal for a 'new constitution' for Palestine, but they rejected it as another attempt to persuade them to accept the terms of the Balfour Declaration.

On 3 June 1922, whilst the delegation was still in London, Winston Churchill published his White Paper on Palestine. The paper – which was in fact drafted by Samuel and, prior to the Cabinet meeting, approved by the Zionist Organisation – reiterated the government's commitment to the Balfour Declaration, but expanded on a number of points.[103] Churchill expressed the view that the British government regarded the proposal that 'Palestine is to become "as Jewish as England is English" … as impracticable' and that it had 'no such aim in view'. He asserted that 'the status of all citizens of Palestine in the eyes of the law shall be Palestinian … [and that] immigration cannot be so great in volume as to exceed whatever may be the economic capacity of the country at the time to absorb new arrivals'.[104] This formula of the limit of immigration being contingent on the economic absorptive capacity of Palestine became the recurrent refrain of the British whenever they felt obliged to reassure the Palestinian community that they were not going to become a minority in the country. It explicitly eschewed the notion of Palestinian self-determination and asserted British control over immigration which became, in the eyes of the Palestinians, the litmus test of British recognition of their national rights.

Whilst the delegation was in a hotel in London, the Council of the League of Nations held a series of private and public meetings in St James's Palace. The Council had been convened to agree the Mandates for Palestine and Syria. Delays had been caused by the Italian government's concerns about aspects of the French Mandate in Syria. Monsignor Ceretti, the Papal Nuncio in Paris, arrived in London to make representations to Council members on behalf of the Vatican, about the management of the Holy Places in Jerusalem.[105] According to Balfour, delays were also caused by the intervention of the USA, which although not a member of the League of Nations, was clearly influential in the eyes of the British. Following

reassurances given to Washington in December 1921, the US administration gave their full backing to the British.[106] At the end of their discussions the Council confirmed the terms of the British Mandate in Palestine on 24 July 1922. The British now had the legitimation of their action by the most authoritative international body of the day together with the backing of their ally, the USA.

Having failed to gain any concessions from the British, the Palestinian delegation eventually left London and arrived back in Haifa on 21 August 1922.[107] The delegation was well received on its return, with crowds calling for independence and the rejection of the Mandate.

THE FIFTH PALESTINIAN CONGRESS: AUGUST 1922 AND CHURCHILL'S WHITE PAPER

On their return from London the delegation made their report to the Fifth Congress which met in Nablus from 22 to 25 August 1922. They reported that Churchill once again dismissed their representations on the grounds that the British were committed to their objectives as expressed in the Balfour Declaration of creating a homeland for the Jews. Major developments had taken place in London in meetings which had happened only streets apart: the one, a Cabinet meeting in Whitehall; the other, the meeting of the Council of the League of Nations in St James's Palace. Both meetings, deciding on the fate of Palestine, took place without the presence of a single Palestinian representative.

The Fifth Congress set about formulating its response to Churchill and developing an action programme. The programme was quite specific and counter to Churchill's White Paper, despite Musa Kazim, on his return, expressing the view that further negotiations with Churchill were still possible.[108] Agreeing eighteen resolutions, the Fifth Congress rejected Churchill's New Palestine Constitution, which he had tried to persuade the delegation to accept. They rejected his overtures and called for a boycott of the elections to the proposed legislative council. The Nablus Congress affirmed that it would continue its 'endeavours for the independence of our country, and for achieving Arab unity by all legal methods, and that we shall not accept the establishing of a Jewish National Home nor Jewish immigration'.[109]

The adopted plan of action proposed the establishment of a 'Palestine Arab Bureau in London', a boycott of both Jewish goods and the Rutenberg electricity scheme, together with steps to stop the sale of 'immovable property to Jews'. In order to strengthen its position, the Congress further agreed to reach out to groups beyond its immediate circle with requests for support. The tone of the discussion and the strategy adopted seemed to suggest a greater awareness of the plight of the dispossessed *fellahin* and a commitment to 'provide means for enlightening the *fellah* on national affairs'. The seriousness of their intent was perhaps evident in the decision to establish 'a "finance scheme" for the collection of funds' to take their activities forward.[110]

Whilst agreeing the action strategy, however, the Congress revealed differences between those who felt there was still the possibility of negotiating with London and those who did not. For a period in 1922, hopes revived of the Turks taking on the responsibility of the Mandate for Palestine, following Turkey's reacquisition of territory taken from it by the Treaty of Sèvres. The Turks, however, were presented with Articles of Peace which included a specific renunciation of any claim 'over Syria, Palestine, Iraq, the Hedjaz, the Arabian Peninsula, the Sudan, Libya and Cyprus'.[111] They did not wish to challenge Britain over the Mandate, and the prospect of Turkey taking over the Mandate from Britain or playing any key role in the future of Palestine rapidly ceased to be significant.

In what was something of a departure from past practice, the Congress, having reaffirmed the general political positions of previous gatherings, discussed how to win support amongst the people of other Arab lands to intensify the campaign against the Zionist project. This stance perhaps constituted a watershed, by its agreement to reach out beyond Palestine for support but also to agitate for coordinated action within the country through a boycott of Samuel's proposed legislative council elections. Following the Congress the Executive Committee became involved in 'protests and representations over land concessions to the Jews and the necessity of safeguarding the interests of the Muslim fellahin who lived on the lands'.[112] This represented a change in emphasis, away from a solely anti-Zionist focus and towards one which began to address social and economic issues and, critically, the role of the British authority. It intimated at steps to link the formal *a'yan*-dominated leadership with the wider popular opposition.

This move took place even though there remained a strong inclination on the part of many of the *a'yan* not to take direct anti-British actions. It marked a beginning, albeit modest in scope, of popular campaigning as a complement to a focus on lobbying the Mandate authority.

After the Fifth Congress, the Arab Executive decided once again to send a delegation to London. Whilst on its way the delegation called at Constantinople and Lausanne. As with the previous delegation's trip to Geneva, the decision was at the request of Syrian representatives who hoped to revive the prospect of a common approach. This time Shibli al-Jamal did not join the party on its trip to Constantinople, perhaps in order to avoid being drawn into discussions on the subject of a joint Syrian–Palestinian approach. In Britain a new Conservative government had been formed following the general election of 15 November 1922. Hopes had been raised by this change, but the delegation was informed at a meeting in January 1923 that the policy of the new government, with respect to the Balfour Declaration, would remain the same. They returned to Palestine in March 1923.

THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AND THE ASSASSINATION OF THE NATION

The Arab Economic Agricultural Conference, held on 1 February 1923, constituted an attempt to develop a broader approach to the economic challenges facing the Palestinian population. The Conference called for the abolition of some taxes, road improvements, schemes to encourage the growth of tobacco, the reopening of the Agricultural Bank and the establishment of an agricultural school. Additionally the Conference called for a law forbidding the sale of land below the size considered necessary to sustain a family. The manifesto of the Conference signalled an attempt to develop a more productive economy and to prevent small self-sufficient producers being driven off the land. It did not raise questions beyond the limits of buying and selling, such as proposing new forms of landownership, greater security for tenant farmers or redistribution of the land to the benefit of the *fellahin*.[113] The economic perspective of the Agricultural Conference was set within the legalistic parameters embodied in the decisions of the Fifth Congress. There was no programme for land reform.

Two subsequent events stimulated optimism amongst those aligned with the majority position at the Fifth Congress in Nablus. The first was the

victory of Mustapha Kemal at the battle of Dumlupinar, which almost coincided with the dates of the Fifth Palestinian Congress and constituted the last battle of the Greco-Turkish War. Samuel suggested that the victory gave confidence to the 'opposition' because it resurrected hope that the Treaty of Sèvres might be renegotiated, placing Palestine back under Turkish influence. The second was that with the change in government arising from the election of the Conservative Party in November 1922, there was a belief this might provide an opportunity to change the British stance on the Mandate.[114] The latter was not such an unreasonable expectation given that on 21 June 1922, the House of Lords had voted to refer the Mandate back to the League of Nations. The vote, however, was reversed a few weeks later on 4 July when Churchill turned it into a vote of confidence on the government's Palestine policy and, with the help of the Labour Party, defeated the attempt to submit the Mandate to the House of Commons by a vote of 292 to 35.[115]

Samuel met members of the Executive Committee on 6 February 1923. He explained to the six representatives of the executive the reasoning behind the government's decision to press ahead with the proposal for a legislative council. The form of the elections was similar to that described in respect of the elections under Ottoman rule, with primary and secondary electors. Justifying his position on the basis that Britain was charged with implementing the League of Nations' Mandate, he explained that it would be in the interests of the people of Palestine to elect the Council. His argument was based on trying to persuade those present that the Council was central to ensuring the implementation of those proposals which had come forward looking for improvements to the education service. In Samuel's view those improvements required consultation and local decision making. He applied this argument to the types of demands formulated by the Agricultural Conference and to areas such as taxation, but suggested that the implementation of any changes required the 'advice of men who have been elected by ordinary constitutional means'.[116]

Samuel pushed his arguments further, proposing that any form of boycott would fail and instancing similar confrontations in Cyprus, Jamaica and India where comparable tactics had also failed. The only consequence, he said, would be that 'those who do not participate lose their share of influence over the course of legislation and administration'. Replying on

behalf of the delegation, Hafiz Bey Toukan put it quite sharply: 'In the same manner as his Excellency feels he must act towards his Government in order to apply its policy, so we also have a duty to perform, and that is to give advice to the population of this country, and we feel that if the nation participates in the elections it will be the assassination of the nation'.[117]

After much campaigning the Arab Executive Committee forced Samuel to drop the proposal for the legislative council by persuading those who had wished to stand to withdraw. On 12 March 1923 a strike took place and shops were closed to celebrate the victory. A memorandum presented by the Middle East Department of the Colonial Office on 28 March 1923, and attached to Samuel's report, revealed the complete breakdown of the British strategy. The momentum for action against the Mandate authority was growing, and on 16 June the Sixth Congress was convened in Jaffa.

THE SIXTH PALESTINIAN CONGRESS: JUNE 1923

An orientation to a more broad-based popular engagement of the people in opposing the Mandate was at the centre of discussion at the Sixth Congress. The Congress took place in Jaffa from 16 to 20 June 1923.[118]

The Congress also saw a debate beginning on action which would break with the legalistic approach of previous Congress decisions. At the centre of the debate over what tactics to employ was the question of taxation and a proposal for a boycott. The proposition stemmed from a resentment against the British, who were accused of distributing monies to Zionist bodies whilst withholding them from Palestinians.[119] Jamal al-Husseini argued the position of boycott on the grounds of no taxation without representation. This resulted in a deep division within the Congress reflecting social divisions between the protagonists. Those who opposed the call were led by 'rich *effendis* … on friendly terms with the Zionists'.[120] Those supporting the demands, like 'Isa al'Issa owner of the newspaper *Filastin* and member of a wealthy citrus industry family, belonged to the emerging middle class.[121]

From a political perspective the splits which took place at the Sixth Congress reflected a fundamental line of divide between those who wished to continue to pursue a campaign of lobbying the British government and those who were coming to the conclusion that there was a need to challenge the British more directly. The moves towards the signing of the Anglo-Arab

Treaty had called into question the commitment of Hussein to Palestinian independence, indicating that he was prepared to acquiesce to the Zionist project and that he had ambitions about his own future role in respect of Palestine. Even some of those who had been sympathetic towards him now became sceptical, suspecting that their own ambitions to play a leading role in Palestine might be thwarted by him. Nevertheless, once again it was agreed that a delegation should be sent to London to clarify what the draft treaty said.

In addition, the Congress called on King Hussein not to sign the Anglo-Arab Treaty, which a majority at the Congress believed would have effectively endorsed the project for the establishment of a homeland for the Jews. The Congress agreed that another delegation, the third such, be sent to London to express opposition to the proposed Anglo-Arab Treaty.[122] The delegation duly left for London on 15 July 1923, spurred on by news that, following a decision on 27 June, a Cabinet Committee had been set up to look at the question of Palestine. The British government had decided to give consideration to the implementation of the Mandate, although they were anxious not to be seen to be deviating from the Balfour Declaration. The Committee acknowledged that there was opposition to the whole project but abruptly dismissed that idea: 'There are some of our number who think that the Declaration was both unnecessary, and unwise, and who hold that our subsequent troubles have sprung in the main from its adoption.' However, in the view of the Committee, 'Whether this policy has been wise or unwise … it is well-nigh impossible for any Government to extricate itself without a substantial sacrifice of consistency and self-respect, if not of honour.'[123] That was not a course the British Empire would set itself on.

Despite the Committee's reflection on the whole nature of the Mandate and even consideration as to whether it should be reformulated by the League of Nations, in the end it concluded by agreeing with the comments of Sir Gilbert Clayton, 'that there is no ground what-ever for advocating the abandonment of the Zionist policy or relinquishing the Mandate'.[124] The Committee Report appeared before the Cabinet on 31 July 1923 with an agreement that 'for the present nothing should be made public in regard to the government's policy, but that this should be announced by the High Commissioner on his return to Palestine in September'.[125]

On Samuel's advice, the Palestinian delegation was refused permission to speak to the Committee, and they failed to meet with any government minister or officials.[126] This treatment of the Palestinian representatives was falling into a regular pattern. The delegation returned to Palestine, but they remained unaware of the Committee's views until October 1923. They did, however, make contact with Hussein's representative in London, Dr Naji al-Asil, whom they briefed on the positions of the Congress towards the Anglo-Arab Treaty. The delegation returned to Palestine but, reflecting the continuing divisions, one pro-Hussein member, Amin al-Tamimi, remained behind to promote to the Arab Executive a sympathetic attitude towards Hussein.[127] Ultimately however, pressure from the majority of the Sixth Congress contributed to the treaty not being ratified. The attacks by the Sauds and their defeat of Hussein's forces ended the negotiations on the treaty rendering it irrelevant since a central aspect of the proposals had been to seek an agreement on borders between the two contending forces.

FROM CONGRESSES TO POLITICAL PARTIES

The debate on the proposal for a tax boycott revealed a split between the large landowners and their supporters on the one hand, and those who came from the middle classes on the other. The wealthier landowners, some well-disposed towards the Zionists, strongly opposed the proposal even though evidence suggests that the boycott would have had wide popular appeal.[128] The developing divisions evident at the Fifth and Sixth Congresses, between the *Majleyisoun* who supported the Husseini grouping on the Supreme Muslim Council, and the Nashashibi backed *Mu'arada*, became sharper. Eventually, in November 1923, some of the latter grouping formed themselves into the political party, *al-Hizb al-Watani al-Arabi al-Filastini* (the Palestinian Arab National Party) led by members of the Nashashibi family.[129]

This political differentiation was further manifested in the establishment of *Hizb al-Zurra* (the Party of Farmers). The social base of *Hizb al-Zurra* was amongst those families who owned land in the villages but were not themselves *fellahin*. The new organisation called for improvements in the agricultural sector, the ending of certain taxes, the establishment of a bank and improvements in agricultural education.[130] However, the party did not adopt an anti-Zionist stance, perhaps because of the support and

encouragement of Zionists like Chaim Kalvarisky, head of the Zionist Executive's Arab Department, and his superior Frederick Kisch, a former British intelligence services colonel, who was head of the Zionist Executive's political department.[131] At least one of the party's leading figures, Haider Tuqan, reported regularly to Kalvarisky on the growth of the organisation which, by the winter of 1924, he claimed, was supported by around 200 villages.[132] Despite the Zionist backing, the existence of the party no doubt owed something to the desire of some of the more rural sectors of society to counter the influence of the urban areas. This was to be a feature of the preparations for the Seventh Congress which would not take place for some years.

The process of party formation was shaped by a number of factors, not least the changing nature of Palestinian society.[133] Those who held the dominant positions within the Supreme Muslim Council and the Arab Executive, in the main, belonged to the *a'yan* and often allied themselves with, or were related to, the Husseini family. Perhaps initially, because of their prominent religious and secular roles in society, the Husseinis did not form a party to maintain their influence. The upheaval caused by the British occupation and its attendant economic and social turbulence, combined with the increased colonisation, resulted in the advent of new political groupings which challenged the status quo. Even amongst those who belonged to the majority Husseini faction, it began to raise questions about the need to seek support amongst wider social layers. The coming decade saw the emergence of a number of parties, reflecting the splits amongst those belonging to the principal sections, but even whilst this process happened some became conscious of the need to recognise the surfacing of new political groupings, some based on social layers outside the traditional *a'yan* networks, and seek to weld them together.

In the Jerusalem city council elections of 1927, Jamal al-Husseini attempted to obtain the support of the Palestine Communist Party (PCP) in order to defeat the Nashashibi faction candidates.[134] Even though the PCP was small it had gained a hearing amongst some sections of Palestinian society, most notably in Jerusalem and Haifa. In 1926, having made contact with PAWS, it organised the *Ihud* (Unity) Conference in which both Jewish and Palestinian workers participated. The following year it intervened in the municipal elections calling on voters not to support the Nashashibi

candidates.[135] Altogether this heralded the beginning of a new period in the development of the political response to the British Mandate by the Palestinian people. The surfacing of relatively new social layers presented itself as a challenge to traditional practices and created the potential for a reshaping of the political landscape.

The establishment of new political parties and organisations constituted a break with the traditionalist coteries based on the *a'yan*. The early years of the 1930s saw a proliferation of political parties and organisations like *Jam'iyyat al-Shubban al-'Arab* (the Arab Young Men's Association), the Committee of the Nablus Congress and *Al-Jam'iyyah al-'Arabiyyah al-Wataniyyah* (the Patriotic Arab Association).[136] The Boy Scouts were organised into a national movement of Arab Boy Scouts independent from the internationally coordinated movement of scouts.[137] On 4 August 1932 the *Istiqlal* (Independence) party was founded with a leadership independent of both the Nashashibis and the Husseinis.

A split occurred in the faction headed by the Nashashibis in 1934 when the Khaldidis, with whom they had been in alliance, united with the Husseinis in the municipal election in Jerusalem.[138] The Nashashibis went on to form *Hizb al-Difa' al-Watani* (the National Defence Party) in December 1934, committed to cooperation with the Mandate authority.[139] Perhaps uniquely at the time, the PCP sought to unify a class-oriented politics with a nationalist perspective in Palestine. Under the influence of the Comintern, the PCP sought to gain support amongst all workers, making a particular effort to recruit Palestinian workers and to make links with PAWS.[140] However, the growth of the party was impaired by the fact that the majority of its members, who were Jewish, were more preoccupied with the debates of political organisations within the *Yishuv* which were competing for the ear of Jewish workers.

The Third International, the Comintern, was established after the Russian Revolution of 1917 in response to what was viewed as the acquiescence by many of European socialist movements to the call by their respective national governments for loyalty for the war effort. The Bolsheviks who established and greatly influenced the Comintern paid a great deal of attention to the politics of the Muslim world because of the large numbers of Muslims in the former Tsarist Empire. They held wide-ranging discussions on the question of self-determination in the Muslim

regions of the former Tsarist Empire and within a month of the revolution issued an 'Appeal from the People's Commissars to the Moslems of Russia and the East' which condemned the anti-Muslim attitude of Tsarist Russia.[141] From 1 to 7 September 1920, they convened the First Congress of the Peoples of the East in Baku, issuing a statement opposing the British presence in Palestine and the role of Zionism.[142]

Despite the failure to win large numbers of Palestinian workers to its ranks, the PCP gained respect and a hearing due to its intervention in support of the campaign by dispossessed *fellahin* in the Affula region.[143] 'In Jaffa it succeeded in setting up the Transport Workers Society, and the communists involved themselves in the struggle of the Jaffa Arab Workers' Association against Zionist pickets formed to enforce the policy of "conquest of labor".'[144] The PCP tried to gain support especially amongst workers in industries in the Dead Sea Salts Company and the Palestine Electrical Company. Conversely the PCP lost the support of Jewish members influenced by Zionism. Some communists or 'political undesirables' were 'got rid of' from the country by the British too.[145]

The PCP had the most radical programme for self-determination of any Palestinian party. In 1931, it adopted a resolution which declared that 'the only solution to the question of the peasantry lies in an insurrectionary revolutionary struggle, waged against the imperialists, the Zionists and the Arab landowners by the fundamental stratum of the peasant masses, under the direction of the working class led by their Communist Party'.[146] Despite advocating a militant line, including armed resistance against land grabs, it did not gain large numbers of members amongst the *fellahin*.

Although the PCP failed to expand its membership, its opinions began to win an audience through its weekly journal, *Haifa*. The journal and other material argued for the adoption of an openly anti-British perspective and championed unity between Jewish and Palestinian Arab workers.[147] Coupled with this orientation towards winning workers, especially Palestinian workers, to its ranks, was a critical attitude towards those in the leadership of politics. The journal criticised the role of the *a'yan* in the national movement and their periodic tendency to seek to gain favour with the Mandate authorities. To a certain extent it was perhaps this criticism of the dominant political leadership, coupled with its self-proclamation as the leadership of the anti-Mandate struggle, that resulted in it playing no role in

any of the Palestinian congresses. The PCP remained very small, in part reflecting the size of the main constituency from which it sought to recruit, the Palestinian working class. Distinctly the PCP attempted to orientate to the changing social character of Palestine, unlike organisations under the leadership of the *a'yan* groupings. However, it did not participate in any major way in the national movement until 1935.[148]

5

British Responses to Palestinian Challenges

THE MANDATE AND ZIONIST PROTO-STATE STRUCTURES

The Balfour Declaration began as a quasi-treaty between the British government and the Zionist Organisation. The terms of the Balfour Declaration gained international recognition when the League of Nations' Mandate was adopted on 24 July 1922. Article 4 of the document stated that 'an appropriate Jewish agency shall be recognised as a public body … [and] the Zionist Organisation, so long as its organisation and constitution are in the opinion of the Mandatory appropriate, shall be recognised as such agency'.[1] From the earliest days the British recognised the Zionist Commission, which subsequently became the Zionist Executive and then the Jewish Agency, as the voice of the *Yishuv*. Chaim Weizmann, the leader, had well-established relationships with the government. In Palestine his friend, William Ormsby-Gore, was attached to the Zionist Commission as the British liaison officer.

In Article 11, the League of Nations document gave the Jewish Agency the power to 'construct or operate, upon fair and equitable terms, any public works, services and utilities, and to develop any of the natural resources of the country, in so far as these matters are not directly undertaken by the Administration'.[2] No equivalent Palestinian body was ever granted such authority or recognised with a comparable status and terms of reference. Although Palestinians were employed in the Mandate administration, this was a British institution implementing British policies.

The high commissioner, Herbert Samuel, attempted to persuade Palestinians to join a variety of Mandate bodies to discuss political arrangements in Palestine. In so doing, he attempted to reassure the Palestinian leadership, citing Churchill's White Paper, that this did not imply conceding that Palestine would become a Jewish state. However, neither was there ever any suggestion that the British would grant the right of the Palestinians to self-determination. Although Palestine, under the criteria of the League of Nations, was designated a 'Class A' Mandate, the British deliberately obfuscated about how and when it might gain its independence. When the high commissioner convened the Advisory Council in Palestine on 6 October 1920, it was by invitation.

Undermining his attempts to dispel Palestinian anxieties, or perhaps indicative of his real intention, was the presence on the Advisory Council of those committed to the establishment of a Jewish state. Yitzhak Ben Zvi, whose support for this position was well known, was selected by Samuel to be a member of the Council. He was a leader of *Ahdut Ha-Avodah* (the Jewish Labour Party) and the *Haganah* (the Defence). He both advocated and organised the establishment of an armed force to achieve statehood. He was a member of the Advisory Council until his resignation in April 1921. According to Tom Segev, Ben Zvi was implicated in the assassination of Jacob Israel de Haan, initially a member of the Zionist camp who became an Orthodox Jew. His murder took place on 30 June 1924 after he had been accused of treason by Ben-Gurion and described by the principal *Yishuv* newspaper, *Ha'aretz*, as 'anti-Semitic scum'.[3]

The status of the *Haganah* reflected the intrinsic ambivalence of the Mandate administration. Initially it had been formed around 1918 as a successor to the pre-war *Hashomer*, the Jewish watchman's association. Officially it was illegal, but it was tolerated by the British administration and throughout the 1920s and beyond it continued to organise as a 'self-defence' force.[4] Alongside its illegal importation of weapons it was also given arms by the Mandate administration from time to time despite the latter's occasional protestations about its activities.[5] As early as July 1921 a Secret War Office report records that in anticipation of 'outbreaks of violence … [t]he High Commissioner, with the assistance of the General Officer Commanding is taking steps to form a species of "Town Guards" in the Jewish villages and colonies by issuing arms to selected men'.[6]

In the mid-1920s the British were content that they could manage the situation and considered that, 'Apart from the Zionist question, which infects the whole political atmosphere, the present Administration is not unpopular … Provided that it is secure from external attack, the task of governing it need not be regarded as one of insuperable difficulty on whatever policy the Administration is based.'[7] They took no steps to disarm the *Haganah*, rather seeing them as an occasionally useful auxiliary to British forces. This relationship became more formally recognised in the following decade.

In the 1930s and especially after 1936 the units of the *Haganah* were recognised as legal. 'In 1937 the *Haganah* had ten thousand men trained and armed and another forty thousand available for rapid mobilisation.'[8] Added to these forces were the 5,000-strong *Notrim*, or Jewish supernumerary police, who were recruited by the British to cooperate with the army and the police.[9] Whilst initially they undertook defensive duties, guarding oil pipelines and the like, they became a force that was used in offensive duties during the course of the Palestinian revolt.[10] Some Zionist armed forces did not wish to form any sort of relationship with the British. The *Irgun Zvai Leumi* (National Military Organisation), under their Commander in Chief Ze'ev Jabotinsky, was on a determined course to take over Palestine and Transjordan from the British by arms if necessary, and consequently would not work with the Mandate administration. It was both an anti-Arab and anti-British body.[11]

THE MANDATE: ECONOMICS AND DEMOGRAPHY

Zionist-owned enterprises were the main beneficiaries of the economic protectionism created by the British administration. This patronage was justified on the basis of Article 11 of the League of Nations' Mandate. Article 11 required that:

> the Administration of Palestine shall take all necessary measures to safeguard the interests of the community in connection with the development of the country, and, subject to any international obligations accepted by the Mandatory, shall have full power to provide for public ownership of control of any of the natural resources of the country or of the public works, services and utilities established or to be established therein.

The article went on to say that, 'the Administration may arrange with the Jewish agency mentioned in Article 4 to construct or operate, upon fair and equitable terms, any public works, services and utilities, and to develop any of the natural resources of the country, in so far as these matters are not directly undertaken by the Administration'.[12] The British established monopoly rights for enterprises in the *Yishuv* through a series of ordinances which principally gave protection to new industries started with settler capital.

As a consequence of the British power over the interpretation of the Mandate they utilised their influence to intervene in the economic development of the country. Article 2 of the Mandate had given them this power under the terms laid down by the League of Nations, which stated that 'The Mandatory shall be responsible for placing the country under such political, administrative and economic conditions as will secure the establishment of the Jewish national home.'[13] New companies were shielded from extra-territorial competition through the imposition of import duties, and monopolies were assigned to companies owned by pro-Zionist entrepreneurs. The significance of the link between these economic policies and their potential political consequences was well understood by many. The Palestinians expressed their opposition to these moves, appearing on demonstrations with placards announcing: 'in Rutenberg's scheme is the foundation of the national home'.[14]

The initial focus of the Zionist movement had been on developing the agricultural sector, but this changed in the mid-1920s. The Manufacturers' Association, set up in Tel Aviv, acted as a lobby group for increased investment in industrial production. The Colonial Office agreed to suggestions from the high commissioner in 1925 that a list of raw materials, identified by enterprises like the Nesher Cement Company, should be allowed into Palestine duty-free. Other companies in Tel Aviv benefitted too. On the other hand the predominantly Palestinian-owned olive oil industry faced the abolition of protective measures and stiff competition from cheaper imports. According to Barbara J. Smith in 'The Roots of Separatism', the new regulations introduced by the Mandate 'were devised to aid those industries capable of relatively large scale investment', and 'whole branches of industry such as printing and book-binding, wine

production, and match making' which were, in the main, owned by pro-Zionist employers.[15]

The new industries that were established benefitted from the financial and material capital entering the country with the newly arrived colonists. They invested in new industries, and in technologies such as motor power, which tended to result in levels of productivity exceeding those of established companies that were, in the main, owned by Palestinians.[16] Focussing on 'Jewish industry', Deborah S. Bernstein has pointed out the rapidity with which this expansion took place. 'The number of establishments increased from a baseline of 100 in 1925, to 395 eighteen years later, while the number of workers, the capital invested, the output and the horsepower used, increased even more rapidly'.[17]

This industrial development had an effect on the demography of Palestine too. Whilst in 1922 the Palestinian population in urban areas was twice the size of the Jewish community, by 1935 that had been completely reversed.[18] Urban society became increasingly dominated by the Zionist colonists. This demographic shift, together with the application of the policy of *avodha ivrit* in the field of employment, accelerated the marginalisation of Palestinian workers. The impact of colonisation was no longer being felt solely in the agricultural areas but was having repercussions on the development of the urban economic and social landscape.

A significant factor contributing to the flow of inward investment, providing jobs for the newly arriving colonists, was a sea change in the character of the Zionist Organisation. For long periods during the 1920s Weizmann had sought to reconcile the two components of worldwide Jewry by seeking to draw non-Zionist Jews into support for the Zionist project. Within world Zionism there was a sense that it had been easier for Soviet Russia to obtain capital from Jews in the United States for its Crimean settlement scheme than it was to obtain contributions for the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine.[19] A decisive political shift took place when the Zionist Organisation moved towards a position of accepting non-Zionist Jews into its structures. The significant gain of the change of policy was that it succeeded in winning the support of non-Zionist Jews in the USA for the Zionist project in Palestine. This was to have particular consequence in the area of inward investment.

In earlier forms of colonisation the imperial country itself was the main if not the exclusive source of capital. In the case of Palestine, the capital that entered the country came from a number of sources in different countries. It included investment from Britain, the Mandate authority, pro-Zionist capitalists and capitalists who were encouraged, by the Zionists, to bring their resources with them to Palestine. Capital for the development of the Dead Sea Salts Concession was gathered by Moses Novomeysky from sources in Paris, the USA and investors who had left Russia.

Added to this was the significant inflow of investment from the USA. According to the Peel Report of 1937, between 1918 and 1937 'over £14 million has been invested in Palestine through the "national funds" and roughly £63 millions by private investors, nearly half the latter sum in the course of the last four years. The total investment, therefore, amounts to £77 millions, and of this at least one-fifth has been contributed by the Jews in the United States.'[20] 'In the period between the two world wars, private capital represented 75 per cent of the funds imported into Palestine … The typical immigrant did not arrive, as is commonly assumed, in total poverty.'[21] This break with the traditional pattern of colonisation underwritten by an imperial sponsor contributed to the settlers becoming less reliant on the British for their economic development. Unlike the colonisations of the earlier period of British imperialism, there were, from the beginning, no organic affinities between the imperial power and the settlers. In the eyes of many within the Zionist movement the end had always been the creation of a state for the Jewish people and, undoubtedly, this relative economic autonomy contributed to an independence from the British from the outset.

An example of the potential created by the opening up of the Zionist Organisation to non-Zionists was reflected in the capital that became available as a consequence of the actions of the US-based Louis Brandeis and Judge Julian Mack, who pledged to secure $1 million for the development of the Dead Sea Salts Concession initiated by Moses Novomeysky. Siberian-born Novomeysky first visited Palestine in 1911, and having analysed the chemicals of the Dead Sea decided it would be a very profitable source of potash.[22] He regarded himself as a Zionist first and a businessman second. He succeeded in holding on to the concession

despite attempts by some political and business interests to prevent the enterprise being run by a non-British company.[23]

From the commencement of the Mandate, and with the full endorsement of the British, political developments had followed a colonial route but in addition took a confessional path. At the centre of the Zionist colonial project was a notion of separation and displacement, evident even in the East Africa proposal discarded in 1905. Whilst the Zionists, in the first two decades of the occupation, did not have the means to achieve the physical transfer or expulsion of Palestinians, it was nevertheless already under consideration. Throughout the 1920s there had been attempts to claim Transjordan as part of *Eretz Israel*, an idea promoted by Weizmann in private discussions with the British in 1929.[24] A key wing of Zionism, the Revisionist Movement led by Jabotinsky, proudly wore a badge as their symbol claiming ownership of both Palestine and Transjordan. The increasingly frequent presentation of the case for a Palestinian population transfer by the Zionists contributed to the drift by the British towards the proposals for partition which were to emerge in the 1930s.[25]

The notion of transfer, intrinsic to the ideology of Zionism, began to be explored more fully as a practical proposal in the late 1930s with the establishment, by the Zionist Agency Executive, of Transfer Committees, which began to look at methods of implementation.[26] The privileging of investment in Zionist-approved firms, the application of *avodha ivrit* and the protective economic measures introduced by the British, definitively discriminated in favour of the Zionist colonists in the economic field. This was not a process of the separation of two distinct economies but rather the encouragement of certain sectors, overwhelmingly owned by members of the *Yishuv*, to the disadvantage of those areas of production predominantly held by Palestinians.[27] The notion of transfer inherent in the developing strategy was comprehensive and would encompass both a displacement of the Palestinian people and the appropriation of the capital resources, factories, enterprises, quarries and so on hitherto held by the Palestinian bourgeoisie.

Events beyond the borders of Palestine shaped political developments within the country. The separation of Syria and Palestine by the two major powers did not result in the rupturing of the historical links between the two countries.

The reasons for the apparent political hiatus between 1925 and 1928 were numerous, and include the decline in immigration to Palestine, the effects of an economic boom in the USA and the difficulties faced by the Zionist Organisation itself. In the period prior to the Wall Street crash of 24 October 1929, the stock market had doubled in value and the apparent boom in the US economy no doubt acted as a magnet for peoples across the world, including Jews leaving Eastern Europe. Paradoxically the crash, which took place in the economy of the USA, reverberated globally and illustrated its increasingly dominant global position.[28]

The period roughly coincides with the *Fourth Aliyah*, which was largely composed of small traders and middlemen from cities like Warsaw and Łódź. Of those who arrived in the mid-1920s only about one-third were *haltuzim*, or pioneers, who actually wanted to be manual labourers. In the eyes of sections of the Zionist labour movement, the majority of those entering the country were regarded as 'capitalists without capital'. They settled in the towns, and the capital they had was liable to be invested in land speculation and building. Only a small amount of their resources was invested in factories and the expansion of agriculture.[29] During this period unemployment grew in the *Yishuv* and, as a consequence, emigration began to increase. The crisis within the *Yishuv* resulted in 8,000 becoming unemployed and confidence in the Zionist project diminished inside Palestine.

The difficulties arising from the deteriorating global economic crisis together with the problems developing in Palestine sharpened the political debate within the *Yishuv*. From around 1925 acute differences arose, which led to the split in 1933 when Jabotinsky left to form a new organisation. Those, like Ben-Gurion, whose political base was in the more cohesive working class sectors of society, succeeded in winning majority support in the Zionist Congress. The *Histadrut* acting as an employer and provider of social support grew throughout the period. As it did so, it developed its corporatist approach linking all strata of the *Yishuv* around a fervently nationalist ideology.

This period of relative quietude did not mean that the questions, which the Palestinian congresses had given voice to, ceased. With only occasional fluctuations, land sales continued throughout the period: the land area sold

in one year more than doubled the previous year's transactions.[30] The area of land purchased from the non-Palestinian big landowners in the years from 1920 to 1927 constituted an average of 80 per cent of all sales, compared to 16 per cent from big Palestinian landowners and just under 3 per cent from *fellahin*. This pattern changed from 1928 onwards when sales by Palestinian landowners and *fellahin* increased. Sales by the big landowners doubled and those by *fellahin* increased six-fold.[31] This pattern was a consequence of a combination of a severe fall in agricultural production due to a variety of plagues, the inability to compete with foreign imported crops and the growing indebtedness of the *fellahin*.[32]

Those *fellahin* displaced by the sales of lands on the coastal plains, in the Jezreel Valley and elsewhere were forced to move to urban areas in search of work. The work they were able to find was frequently casual in nature. Whilst Palestinian workers were paid the same wages as their Jewish counterparts in certain Mandate authority-controlled areas of employment like the railways, in other areas where the employer was pro-Zionist pressures were brought to bear to pay Jewish workers more money than their co-workers.

The cumulative impact on the economy of the Mandate administration's implementation of the Balfour Declaration was now being experienced with ever increasing severity in the urban sector. The symbiotic relationship between the urban and the rural took on added significance in the social realm. The relatively recent but accelerating displacement of *fellahin*, forcing them into the towns and cities, added another dimension to the dynamic of that relationship which was to surface in the political sphere, as will be examined later. Greater numbers of Jewish immigrants, many coming from urban environments, were also gravitating towards the towns. The segregationist employment policies coupled with a separationist practice in the sphere of workplace organisations created major obstacles in the way of developing a unified trade union movement.

Farmers and *fellahin* were vulnerable to the swings in the prices of products on the world market as a result of which indebtedness became widespread. In 1930 the 'bulk of the wheat crop … was mortgaged for debt payment to moneylenders, many of whom were grain merchants'.[33] In order to survive and prepare crops for the coming year the *fellahin* were forced into borrowing money, frequently from the large landowners who charged

exorbitant interest on the money lent. In some cases money was loaned at 30 per cent and above, and for many of them selling land may have seemed the only option. Some Palestinians acted as brokers facilitating the sale of lands. Yehoshua Porath states that amongst those who sold land or brokered sales were 'people from varying strata: opposition members of the SMC and of the AE, party leaders representatives to the National Congress and prominent members and activists of the MCA and other nationalist organisations, Mayors, notables and the common people'.[34] Those close to the Nashashibi-led oppositionists were more involved, though this activity was not exclusive to them.

This fracture, between the subaltern embourgeoisified landowners and their increasingly proletarianised former tenants, made the creation of a united nationalist movement more difficult. In an economic sense it could be said that both groups were placed in a position of precariousness. The *a'yan* who dominated the political organisations, which had developed in Palestine, wished to end the sale of lands in order to preserve their privileges rather than to displace the economic and social relationships which had previously existed. In the policies adopted by the congresses they failed to elaborate a programme, of land redistribution for example, which might have contributed to the formation of a national movement which could mobilise all layers of society by guaranteeing security of tenancy for the *fellahin*.[35]

PALESTINIAN POLITICAL FACTIONALISM AND ZIONIST SECTARIANISM

Although there were no Palestinian congresses between June 1923 and June 1928, it would be an error to view this as a period of political inactivity. During this period political parties were formed which reflected different components of society. This change marked in part a further transition from the hereditary politics of the *a'yan* to forms of organisation which reflected social interests, albeit one which was in part aided by the intervention of the British and the Zionists. The hierarchical social relations inherited from the Ottoman period and still to some extent preserved in Palestinian society were challenged by the imperialist-driven changes in the nature of economic relations. The societal connections produced by the older forms of economic relationships were broken by the newer alienating ones associated with commodity production and the marketisation of society. In the absence of the congresses, which were a consequence of an inability to

reconcile the two dominant components of the nationalist movement the *Majlesiyoun* and the *Mu'arada*, the debate over strategy took place within separate groups. Perhaps the most polarised positions in this debate were reflected in the discussions within the Arab Executive itself, where the failed lobbying strategy that had been adopted to influence the British was now being challenged.

At the meeting on 26 October 1923, just a few months after the Sixth Congress, an argument took place on strategy and tactics in the Executive Committee. There was agreement to adopt a policy of non-cooperation with the government and opposition to the proposal for the creation of an Arab Agency. However, there remained differences as to the type of tactics that should be adopted in resisting the British. Mohamed Ali Eltaher, who was secretary of the Palestine Committee in Egypt, favoured a revolt against them, but in the opinion of Musa Kazim such a step would be counterproductive at that time.[36] Perhaps because he was based in Cairo, Ali Eltaher's opinions failed to carry the day but they were nevertheless indicative of developments which were to surface later.

The Sixth Palestinian Congress was divided over a number of issues that have been touched upon already. Just four months after it had taken place, and one month after the executive had debated the issue of intensifying the opposition to the British, those who gave their support to the current led by the Nashashibi family moved to establish a political party embodying their positions. In reality the step to establish the two parties was the culmination of a process which had been developing for a number of years.[37] *Al-Hizb al-Watani al-'Arabi al-Filastini* (the Palestinian Arab National Party) held its first conference on 9 and 10 November 1923, electing an eight-member Executive Committee with Sheikh Sulayman al-Taji al-Faruqi as president, and Fakhri Nashashibi playing a leading organising role. Fakhri, who was the nephew of Raghib, the mayor of Jerusalem, sought financial backing from Zionists on the grounds that the party's platform would accommodate the creation of a homeland for the Jews, but he did not receive it. The Zionists favoured the party but did not donate money to it.[38]

A few months later *Hizb al-Zurra* (the Party of Farmers), which invariably aligned itself with *al-Hizb al-Watani al-'Arabi al-Filastini*, was established in 1924 with the support of Zionist funding. The objective of

Zionist support for such initiatives was to attempt to dilute the opposition of the Palestinian leadership to the creation of a homeland for the Jews. The party was formed in the Nazareth, Nablus-Jenin and Hebron regions and was based on sheikhs who were influential in their villages. The problems that rural communities faced became more difficult through the 1920s, as the Hope Simpson Report would record.[39] The issues of concern were not only related to the sale of lands to Zionist organisations, but the difficulties Palestinian farmers faced when attempting to access loans at non-punitive rates of interest. Obtaining low interest rate loans would have enabled them to capitalise their farms and offset the troubles caused by the periodic fluctuations in the market price of their produce.[40] The increase in sales of land by owner-occupiers in the early 1930s was an indication of this growing problem.

The seeming inability of the existing political leaderships to wring any significant concessions from the British led to a sharpening of the divide between the two dominant trends within Palestinian nationalism, and also to divisions within the majority current led by the Arab Executive. It was perhaps in response to this situation that the Supreme Muslim Council began to appear as a political force, though by its very nature this was problematic. By definition it could not represent the whole of Palestinian opinion and it too was riven by the same political problems that beset the Congress. The situation was further exacerbated by the actions of *al-Jam'iyyah al-Islamiyya al-Wataniyyah* (the National Muslim Association), which sought to discredit the Sixth Congress in its protest to the high commissioner, arguing that it did not represent the Palestinian people.[41] However, a confessional politics would not bring about a unified perspective since Christian Palestinians would inevitably be marginalised if not alienated.[42]

Attempts were made to reconcile the two wings of the nationalist movement, including an attempt to convene a Seventh Palestinian Congress in 1924. To prepare for the Congress a joint group made up of four members of the Arab Executive and four representatives of the opposition was set up. One of the demands which proved the breaking point, however, was that the Nashashibi opposition dissolve its political party and unify with those who supported the Arab Executive. Supporters of *Hizb al-Zurra*, however, refused to endorse such a move and the proposal for the Congress

was blocked. Notwithstanding these differences a unified display of opposition to British policies was possible, as exemplified by the strike on 25 March 1925 in protest at the arrival of Balfour in Palestine.[43] A further attempt to convene the Congress took place in 1926 and again in 1927. Factional divisions within the opposition group provoked by an element of regionalism proved the major stumbling block as various individuals refused to collaborate in the venture.[44]

When the Seventh Palestinian Congress was eventually convened in Jerusalem in June 1928 there was a notable shift in its composition from previous congresses. Those who supported the development of a more collaborative line towards the Mandate authorities were larger in number and Congress decisions reflected that view, refraining from an explicit rejection of the Balfour Declaration. Those in the northern regions who were more supportive of the Nashashibis, and some of the Christians who had been alienated by what they viewed as hostility from some Muslims, came together to support the call for the establishment of a legislative council. The Congress elected a new forty-eight-member Executive Committee composed of 'two Muslim delegates [from each sub-district], one from the camp of the SMC and one from amongst its opponents; in addition there would be twelve Christian representatives'.[45]

The positions adopted, however, did not meet with universal approval. Inside the Congress a group of younger delegates led by Hamdi al-Husseini from Gaza demanded that the Congress call for self-determination in the context of a pan-Arabist orientation.[46] They took the view that the decisions of the Congress fell short of the goals that should be set and they were not alone in having this critical attitude. A few years later the position they took was echoed by the fledgling Palestinian Communist Party, which characterised the Arab Executive and the Seventh Congress as 'having entered on the road of traitorous competition with the Zionists in bargaining for concessions from British imperialism'.[47]

The British were aware of the sharpening orientation towards an explicitly anti-British stance by increasing sections of the Palestinian community. Amongst some British politicians there was a recognition that this contradictory position resulted from their adherence to the Balfour Declaration. In a memorandum to the Cabinet dated 28 March 1934, the secretary of state for the colonies, Philip Cunliffe-Lister, warned the

government that 'Arab hostility today is not merely hostility to the Jews, but hostility towards the British Government as the authors of immigration'.[48] It was clear to him that the majority of *fellahin* displaced by land purchases in fact finished up unemployed, and that Palestinian unemployment could not be resolved as long as all employment vacancies were to be filled by new settler-colonists. His view was that only by the Zionists abandoning their employment policy could a basis be found to resolve the opposition to Jewish immigration expressed by the Palestinian population.

PALESTINE AND SYRIA, 1925–7

When the British and French moved to implement the Sykes–Picot agreement's division of Greater Syria, sections of the population on both sides of the border, in Palestine and Syria, followed developments closely. In Palestine, in the early years, opposition to the British occupation and colonisation tended to follow a pattern of popular mobilisations (at times violent), congresses and delegations to London. In Syria in the mid-1920s, opposition to the actions of the French erupted into an armed uprising.

The Great Syrian Revolt, or the Great Druze Revolt, which took place between 1925 and 1927, began in the area of Jebel Druze but extended and made links with nationalist forces in Damascus. During the two years of conflict the occupiers lost control of parts of Syria. The French militarily defeated the uprising, but only after they were forced to draft in 50,000 troops, including reserves from Morocco and Senegal. The rebellion culminated in an estimated 6,000 Syrians killed, together with 2,000 soldiers of the occupying army, most of which came from parts of the French Empire. In addition an estimated 100,000 people were driven from their homes.[49]

Having subdued the uprising however, the French decided to adopt a more conciliatory attitude and entered into discussions with Syrian political groupings. Whilst the French naturally favoured those who had not participated in the uprising, the discussions which took place produced a more conciliatory conclusion than they had intended. As a consequence, a Constituent Assembly was elected. The Assembly approved a detailed constitutional document which, 'declared Syria (including Lebanon, Palestine and Transjordan) to be one and indivisible'.[50] Going further,

Article 110 stated that the new Syrian government would establish an army whilst further sections proposed that the president of the republic could sign treaties and control internal law.[51] This was not to the liking of the French who, a year later, rejected the Constituent Assembly's decisions and imposed their own constitution, giving Paris the final say in the affairs of the country.

A successful general strike took place in Palestine early in 1925, protesting the presence of Balfour in Jerusalem to open the Hebrew University. However, this did not lead to an armed uprising similar to that which had taken place in Syria against their Mandate authority. The political leaders in the country continued to put forward a strategy of lobbying the British government in the hope that they would recognise Palestine's right to self-determination. When L.S. Amery, the colonial secretary, arrived in April 1925 he was met by the representatives of the Arab Executive Committee, *al-Hizb al-Watani al-Arabi al-Filastini* (the Palestinian Arab National Party) and *Hizb al-Zurra* (the Party of Farmers). On behalf of the group, Sheikh Sulayman al-Taji al-Faruqi, president of the National Party, put forward the case that they considered that there was a symmetry of interests between the Palestinians and the British.[52] At this moment in time there was a divergence of approach being adopted in the respective countries.

Those who had supported the idea of Palestine as part of a Greater Syria did not, at this time, take up arms against the British, although money was collected for the rebels in Syria indicating a degree of sympathy for their cause.[53] The scale of fatalities and the fate of those who carried out the uprising might have dissuaded many of the main Palestinian political figures from pursuing a similar course. If the French were able to draw on reserves from outside the region, those who lived in Palestine knew very well that this was also the case for the British. The British had been the victors against the Ottoman army and their allies the Germans had been defeated. Troops from the British Empire had already been deployed in Palestine both in the fight against the Ottoman Empire and in the subsequent occupation of the country. In Whitehall the Cabinet showed no real anxieties about the situation in Palestine.

The connections between Syrian nationalists and the Palestinians were not completely severed by this experience though. A number of those who

fought in Syria against the French in 1925–7 subsequently participated in the Palestinian revolt of 1936–9. Fawzi al Qawukji, who played a prominent role in the Syrian Revolt, spent a number of years in exile in Iraq. In 1927 he had gone to Palestine seeking support for the Syrian cause. During his time in Iraq he visited Jerusalem: in 1934, 1935 and early in 1936. He met Hajj Amin al-Husseini and had discussions with leaders on a plan for a combined revolt in Syria and Palestine. Although there was a general strike against the French in Syria in 1936, the French authorities negotiated with those leading the action and it did not develop into a full revolt. Qawukji, who was essentially a pan-Arabist, transferred his attention, taking a group of volunteers with him in 1936 to join the Palestinian uprising, where he declared himself its leader.[54] Said al-'As and Sheikh Muhammad al-Ashmar were two other veterans of the fighting who also travelled to Palestine to join the fighting.

Within Syria, however, it was the ambitions of Faisal, now king of Iraq, which was pushing forward an agenda based on creating bonds between Syria and Iraq, in part as a protection against the perceived ambitions of Turkey towards northern Iraq. Faisal had for a brief interlude been the king of Syria in 1920, before the British made him king of Iraq in August 1921. In later years these ambitions were to strengthen as, in some respects, they echoed those of the British: to secure a safe outlet for oil from Mosul to the Mediterranean Sea.[55] Neither Faisal nor his brother Abdullah, however, wished to promote a strategy to reincorporate Palestine into *Bilad al-Sham*.

Another factor contributing to the difference between the responses of the Palestinian population in Palestine compared to that in Syria, may have been the fluctuating pattern of settler inflow coupled with a financial crisis in the Zionist Organisation. In the 1920s there were quite extreme differences between various years with regard to the numbers of settlers entering the country. In 1920, 8,223 Jewish settlers entered the country in comparison to 34,386 in 1925. By 1928 this figure had declined to 2,178 having been recorded as entering Palestine. This reduction may have persuaded some that numbers might decline still further. It certainly remained the case that in every year in the 1920s, with the exceptions of 1925 and 1926, there were more Jewish emigrants to the USA than to Palestine. In 1924 some 49,989 Jews emigrated to the USA, predominantly from Eastern Europe, in comparison to 13,892 who went to Palestine. The increase in immigration to Palestine in the mid-1920s was a consequence of

the restrictions introduced in the USA, together with economic factors in Poland and a decline in Zionist Organisation finances.[56]

Another possible reason for the fluctuation in the numbers of settlers entering Palestine was the economics of the countries from which they originated and consequentially the resources they were able to bring with them. The Peel Report noted that Palestine suffered an economic crisis in the four years of 1926–9:

> The outstanding feature of the four years after 1925 was the economic depression which afflicted Palestine and, in particular, the National Home. It was not a part of the world-wide depression which began to operate in the course of 1929, and the causes of it are difficult to assess with certainty. One factor is undisputed, the collapse of the Polish *złoty* and the restrictions on currency in Eastern Europe generally which seriously impoverished the Jewish immigrants who came from that part of the world. Whatever the cause, the result of the depression was a sharp fall in the rate of immigration.[57]

This created something of a financial crisis for the Zionist organisation in Palestine, which limited their capacity to support newly arrived settlers. It has been estimated that around half of the immigrants to Palestine came under the umbrella of the Zionist organisations.[58] For a period, Jewish emigration from Palestine actually exceeded the inward movement of settlers despite growing anti-Semitism across parts of Europe. The nature of the Palestinian response to events may have been influenced by a perception that the changes taking place under the Mandate were not going to be as adverse as originally thought.[59]

THE BRITISH, THE A‘*YAN* AND COMPRADOR POLITICS

The fundamental ambiguity and contradiction at the centre of the Balfour Declaration affected British attitudes towards the indigenous Palestinian community. From the British perspective they were attempting to co-opt the whole of the *a‘yan* into a project which was strategically antipathetic to the latter’s own aspirations for social and political pre-eminence, let alone the attainment of self-determination. For their part the British did not wish to co-opt the *a‘yan* and create a comprador social layer, as they had done elsewhere, because their aim was to displace them and employ the Zionist colonisers to serve that role. They did not wish to jeopardise the goal of incorporating Palestine into their imperial framework by giving the *a‘*yan too much importance. As far as possible therefore, they sought to avoid

completely alienating the Palestinian leadership for fear it might drive them into the arms of more uncompromising forces and result in a full-scale anti-imperialist struggle.

The *a'yan* too faced a contradiction. Whilst they recognised that the Balfour project was contrary to the long-term goal of self-determination, they nevertheless wished to avoid confrontation and jeopardise their positions. Instead they wished to retain their status by demonstrating they were effective interlocutors between the administration and the Palestinian masses. As a consequence this rendered the task of developing a strategy adequate to challenge the British occupation problematic. The realities of their eviction from the land and the struggle for existence which confronted increasing numbers of Palestinians forced the *a'yan* to hesitate about accepting the enticements of London. Palestinian political leaders were constantly made aware that their base of support would be seriously undermined unless they challenged economic and political threats resulting from the sale of land, discriminatory employment policies and colonisation.

The social and economic character of Palestine underwent dramatic changes from the period of the Ottoman Empire to the Mandate. These changes were reflected in the forms of political organisation which arose and the positions they adopted. When the British occupied Palestine two groupings of notables or *a'yan* existed whose prestige was largely based on their distinct roles. One group consisted of those families, such as the Nashashibis, whose prestige was founded on the positions they held within society emanating from the structures of the Ottoman apparatus. Raghib al-Nashashibi, for example, had been a member of the Ottoman Parliament and the chief engineer for Jerusalem.[60] This grouping, which owed its status much more directly to the Ottoman apparatus, was in a more vulnerable position in Mandate Palestine as the basis for its status had been removed. This not only affected individuals in Jerusalem but also those in Nablus, Acre and other cities.[61]

The Nashashibis, whose social position was linked to the Ottoman Empire, took the view initially that Palestine should remain within the framework of a Greater Syria. They were inclined towards a positive relationship with the French believing that this would ensure the most likely way for retaining the unity of *Bilad al-Sham*. They believed that this would offer the best prospect of preserving their status. The steps taken by the

British and the French to enact the Sykes–Picot agreement separating Palestine from the rest of the region swiftly led to a realisation that this was not the case. Henceforth those in this grouping changed their positions completely and began to base their aspirations on a strategy of alliance with the occupiers.

The other *a'yan* grouping held positions based on more localised structures in the spheres of urban and religious administration. These more locally oriented structures continued to function under the Mandate with British administration consent, even after the links with Constantinople had been severed. Those who belonged to this grouping included members of the Husseini and Khalidi families whose positions, and therefore status, remained largely intact under the British.[62] This changed post-war environment influenced the political attitudes towards the British adopted by members and supporters of the two groups of *a'yan*, and came to be reflected in the political organisations they set up.

Those, like the Husseini and Khalidi families, who fell into the second category of *a'yan*, whose positions were derived from the more local structures, felt able to adopt a more independent position. This would vary according to the pressures exerted on them by those same local communities. The political allegiances expressed by these two main groupings were never rigidly fixed as, from time to time, members of both groupings joined the rival group and advanced the positions of their new grouping against their erstwhile allies.

This combination of factors almost certainly strengthened the position of those amongst the Palestinian population who rejected the proposal for an elected legislative council. The positive response to voter registration hinted at the enthusiasm to engage in a democratic process. However, the overwhelming rejection of the proposal bore witness to the unity of opposition to a measure largely regarded as disingenuous. Samuel prided himself on the reality that he had sought support for a more accommodating approach without recourse to coercion or bribery: 'Not a pound has been spent by the Government on douceurs to individuals or in subventions to newspapers.'[63]

Despite this disavowal of interference in the political process, he sought to encourage the growth of the Moderate Party to encourage a more sympathetic Palestinian engagement with the Mandate authority. Both he

and subsequent high commissioners and Mandate administrations were not averse to attempting to influence the promotion of individuals, political organisations and parties whom they thought would be favourably inclined towards the British.[64] This was a practice also pursued by Zionist organisations and individuals who tried to cultivate those they thought to be sympathetic to their cause and supportive of the Balfour project.[65] In the eyes of at least one author, Yehoshua Porath:

> there is no doubt whatsoever – abundant evidence exists in the files of the Zionist Executive – that the majority of the prominent personalities of the opposition benefited from financial support from the Zionists, made use of their help for various personal needs, and, when they came to set up their first political organisation, enjoyed the active support of this element'.[66]

After the collapse of the first legislative council proposal it was perhaps hardly surprising that Samuel's attempts in 1923 to establish an advisory council came to nothing. Ongoing divisions remained in the Palestinian leadership and were reflected in the preparations for the Palestinian congresses. The splits revealed differences of perspective between two tendencies composed of social groups with divergent though not contradictory objectives. The divisions which had existed around the policy of a Greater Syria continued to influence the positions taken by different groups, but those who had wished to establish *Bilad al-Sham* were now deprived of a partner by the French. Those holding positions in the local structures, not beholden to the Ottoman authorities, were more inclined towards independence.

The structure of the advisory and legislative councils which Samuel, as high commissioner, proposed, was based on the fictive narrative of creating an equilibrium between the Palestinian community and the Zionist settlers. The Palestinian community had a good knowledge and understanding of the Zionist project and an appreciation of what the British were trying to do. Indeed the British government knew this too, as the secretary of state for the colonies, Winston Churchill, had met with a deputation from the Haifa Congress in Cairo and again in Jerusalem in March 1921, and had been told the positions that had been adopted.[67]

The view of the Palestinians adopted at the Third Congress had been clearly spelt out to Churchill and, as has already been noted above, he in turn reported their stance to the Cabinet. There was no ambiguity about

their goals: the repudiation of the Balfour Declaration; the establishment of a sovereign Palestinian parliament elected by the Palestinian people; an end to Jewish immigration; the return to Ottoman Laws; and an end to any proposal separating Palestine from her "sister States".[68] The *A'yan* were not prepared to act as the comprador class to British imperialism.[69]

The British were also capable of interfering in Palestinian concerns in other ways. Samuel intervened in the election of the mufti of Jerusalem on 12 April 1921, to ensure the accession to the post of al-Hajj Amin al-Husseini, by displacing candidates supported by his rivals the Nashashibis. He was perhaps looked on favourably because of the attitude of his elder brother Kamil al-Husseini, the previous mufti, who had consistently been supportive of the British and consequently received their approval.[70] The British administration played the same role in the election process that the Ottomans had before them, but Samuel stepped in to obtain the withdrawal of one of the candidates when al-Hajj Amin came fourth and was therefore technically ineligible for consideration by the British administration. After a great deal of lobbying on his behalf he was appointed.[71]

One institution that was established with British endorsement in Palestine was the Supreme Muslim Council, which was inaugurated on 9 January 1922 at a meeting in Government House. The Supreme Muslim Council was comprised of members from the four districts of Acre, Nablus, Jaffa and Jerusalem/Gaza, voted on by an electoral college and not selected by the administration. It was a body which by its very nature was intended to be responsible for the conduct of Muslim affairs, the management of *awqaf* (religious endowments), the appointment of *qadis* (Sharia law judges), *waqf* commissioners (officeholders responsible for religious endowments), *imams* (leaders of mosques) and other duties in the religious field. Al-Hajj Muhammad Amin al-Husseini was elected its president with the support of forty of the forty-seven members of the Council, and held the post from 1922 until 1937.

The Council members played a role in society beyond the boundaries of Islam. They acted in a political role, sending delegations to parts of the Muslim world to raise funds, working in alliance with the Arab Executive and attending all of the Palestinian congresses.[72] Rachid Khalidi, in 'The Iron Cage', expressed the opinion that 'never in the preceding several hundred years of Ottoman rule had such power over religious institutions

and the resources they allocated been concentrated in local hands'.[73] By legitimating its establishment Samuel had hoped to gain a degree of gratitude for his patronage and use the body as a means to assess wider community opinion.[74] By definition the Council did not include any Christian representation.

THE SEVENTH PALESTINIAN CONGRESS, 1928

Even though the proposal for a legislative council had been rejected in 1923, the idea remained a central feature of the Mandate administration's approach. At times the plan appeared to receive a more favourable consideration from bodies like the Arab Executive, one of whose leading figures, al-Hajj Amin al-Husseini, voiced support for the idea in 1925.[75] His backing, however, was a tactical attempt to seek advantage in the debate against other members of the Arab Executive. The differences followed a familiar route of dividing between the Nashashibi supporters of *al-Hizb al-Watani al-'Arabi al-Filastini* and their allies in *Hizb al-Zurra*, on the one hand, and those supporting the majority in the Arab Executive grouped around Musa Kazim al-Husseini, on the other. It was as a result of these internal disputes and differences, which related to the composition of the Supreme Muslim Council, that attempts to convene the Seventh Palestinian Congress continuously stalled.[76]

The Palestinian congress resolutions, the delegations to London, the meetings with the colonial secretary and the high commissioner, failed to produce any change in British attitudes. The British repeatedly refused to agree to any of the demands of the Palestinian political leadership to end Jewish immigration and the sale of lands, or to accept any move towards majority self-government. This intransigence on the part of London began to impact more profoundly on the evolution of political organisation inside Palestine. Following the Sixth Palestinian Congress there was a gap from June 1923 until June 1928 before the next congress was called. The following Palestinian congress, the seventh, did not take place until 20 June 1928, some five years after its predecessor. In part this reflected the impasse that the Arab Executive politics had reached with the splits that had been emerging.

The gap between the Sixth and Seventh Congresses was the consequence of a variety of factors. Internal disagreements between the

rival political currents continued to obstruct the calling of the Seventh Congress. Contending factions failed to reach agreements on the formation of a unified body that would have the authority to call the Congress. In addition to the reasons suggested above, the delay was a result of seemingly unresolvable differences, in part reflecting a polarisation emerging from a sharpening social differentiation. This resulted in the further consolidation of groupings into contending organisations.

The divisions centred around a desire to hold the Seventh Congress outside of Jerusalem. This apparently symbolic demand was connected, however, to a desire to reshape the composition of the Congress by an insistence that representation should be proportional to the size of the cities and regions. The opposition to the existing format came from areas in the north that felt underrepresented. The changes that came in were subsequently supported by members of the Christian community, which was allocated ten representatives at the Congress. This alliance reflected the growing influence of the more moderate current in the National Movement.

In the end an agreement was reached, though the demand that the Congress be held outside of Jerusalem was not conceded. This structure restricted the dominance which families like the al-Husseinis had held. The 227 delegates were spread proportionately across the country. They reorganised the structure of the Arab Executive body, making it more geographically inclusive and ensuring representation from the two wings that had been at odds with each other prior to the Congress.

The platform agreed by the Congress reflected the strength of support for the more moderate positions. Although a legislative council had been rejected, the Congress adopted a stance that a representative legislative body should be established. The idea may have been to forward the proposal for a constituent assembly, although the term was never used. The intention, however, was clearly that a body should be established on a similar basis to those which had existed in other countries, therefore implicitly suggesting that the British embark on a course preparatory to self-determination in Palestine.

A significant feature of the Congress was the appearance of younger delegates. Once again, as at previous stages of the development of Palestinian politics, a new group was making an appearance. The positions they voiced challenged the majority view that had been agreed. They wished that the Congress make a definitive statement calling for complete

independence. They wanted ‘Palestine for the Palestinians’ and put forward a pan-Arabist line, invoking the decisions of previous congresses to justify their arguments. Although the reference to past decisions was contrary to the views being promoted by the majority of those present, it was agreed, suggesting that the underlying debate on strategy and tactics remained unresolved.

THE EVENTS OF 1929

An initiative to create a legislative council promoted in 1929 by the high commissioner, Sir John Chancellor, came to nothing because of the political situation in the country. Whether it is possible to pick out one particular year and identify it as a defining moment is open to debate, however 1929 was certainly an important year in the history of Palestine. Hillel Cohen has described it as, ‘the year in which relations between Jews and Arabs changed radically, the year that shaped the consciousness of both sides for decades thereafter’.[77]

The area known as the Wailing Wall to Jews and as *Buraq* to Muslims had been contested for a number of years. On 24 September 1928 Jewish worshippers erected a divider for men and women praying which was removed by the British. This led to the dispute taking on a more serious character as the area which had profound religious significance for both groups effectively became a dispute about national rights. The view of the British administration had been that the status quo should apply, allowing Jewish worship at the site but not the construction of anything of a permanent nature.[78] The matter remained unresolved, however, and the area became the centre of a further dispute in 1929.

The events around the Wailing Wall or *Buraq* with Zionist and Palestinian demonstrations and counter demonstrations, beginning on 15 August 1929, were to constitute a watershed in the evolution of politics in the country.[79] A procession of Jews though Jerusalem, led by Zionists from Tel Aviv, culminated with the singing of the Zionist anthem at the site revered as a holy place by both communities. By way of response around 2,000 Palestinians demonstrated in Jerusalem against what was considered a provocation.[80] In the ensuing days a Jewish youth was stabbed and died a few days later. On 23 August, Muslim villagers converged on Jerusalem believing that there would be an attempt to seize control of the *Buraq*. The

police were unable to disarm those present. News of these events spread throughout Palestine and led to attacks on Jews in a number of places in the country. In Hebron sixty Jews were killed and a further forty-five in Safad. Altogether 133 Jews and 116 Palestinians (both Muslims and Christians) were killed, with 339 and 232 wounded respectively. The majority of the Palestinians were killed by British forces.[81]

Alongside the killings, attacks and retaliations took place on buildings, neighbourhoods and places associated with one or other of the communities. Whilst the confrontations began around an ostensibly religious focus they took on a more overtly nationalist character. In some areas the attacks by Palestinians were solely against Jews whilst in other areas, predominantly those which were almost exclusively Palestinian, attention turned against the British or places associated with the Mandate authority. A debate regarding the events began amongst sections of the Palestinian community. Within the Arab Youth movement this led to a split between a majority who wished to focus the attack against the Jewish community and a minority who wanted to turn attention towards the British.[82] The sharp actions by the British administration effectively resolved the debate in favour of the minority.[83]

The British response was swift and, for the time being, decisive. In the following days over 1,000 Palestinians were arrested, of whom twenty-six were sentenced to death. Towns and villages considered to have participated in the actions had collective punishments imposed on them. With the introduction of drastic and punitive measures by the British, sections of the *a'yan* leadership disavowed any association with the events, rejecting accusations that they had instigated them or played any role in them.

At the same time a different dynamic was playing out amongst wider sections of the Palestinian population, with the creation of popular committees created to assist the call for armed struggle. In total, an estimated 400 volunteers came forward to take part. Police reports from the Haifa sub-district for 5 October describe arms, 'being smuggled both from Syria and Trans-Jordan', whilst a secret memorandum from the officer commanding the Arab Legion (Transjordan) reported meetings of sheikhs who had discussed 'the possibility of marching armed force into Palestine'.[84] The report details the spread of 'gangs' prepared to take action and the movement of arms to assist the anti-British forces, including rifles

and ammunition smuggled in by camel and hidden away in the countryside.[85] The seriousness of the threats being posed was concerning the British: 'Experienced bandits are being consulted as to the best means of carrying out guerrilla warfare, which may commence after the Commission for London arrives and completes its report.'[86] The report warned that preparations of this kind were being made across Palestine.

A Secret Intelligence Report of 13 November 1929, received by the British Cabinet, identified the existence of a 'Boycott Committee' which consisted of '24 members, eleven of whom are stated to be members of the Palestinian Communist Party', the objective of which, it claimed, was to assassinate any Palestinian who broke the boycott.[87] The report additionally stated that the purpose of the organisation was to undertake reprisals against Jews in the event that death sentences were carried out on Palestinians. This latter suggestion seems questionable in view of the participation of members of the PCP in the Committee and that party's explicit opposition to attacks against Jews.

The boycott was organised under the auspices of the Arab Higher Committee by the local 'national committees and national guard units'. This creation of popular committees constituted a departure from the traditional ways of organising. It was a break with the forms of pressure politics developed by the hierarchical and hereditary leaderships which had hitherto been at the forefront of the campaign for national rights. It was yet another manifestation of the influence of the growth of new layers created by the social differentiation taking place. The emergence of large numbers volunteering to be part of a militant opposition to the British suggests the development of a more widespread anti-imperialist perspective and a turn away from an exclusive focus on the Jewish settlers. Additionally, whilst the PCP did not represent a mass organisation it had a singular orientation towards the Palestinian working class, and its presence on the Boycott Committee signalled an intent to seek support for its explicitly anti-British orientation.[88] Whilst the importance of the PCP should not be exaggerated, the role it played was indicative of the fact that the Palestinian working class was emerging as an independent voice within the struggle for self-determination.

THE SHAW COMMISSION REPORT: APRIL 1930

The response of the British to the events surrounding the Wailing Wall or *Buraq* was to set up an inquiry which would examine the riots that took place and report to the Cabinet. The Commission, chaired by Sir Walter Shaw, published their report in April 1930. They decided that the Palestinians were the instigators of the attacks, but recognised that 'the fundamental cause of the outbreak was the Arab feeling of animosity and hostility towards the Jews consequent upon the disappointment of their political and national aspirations, and fear for their economic future'.[89] In the eyes of the Commission, 'The attack neither was nor was intended to be a revolt against British authority in Palestine.'[90] Whilst largely reiterating the White Paper policy of 1922, the Commission expressed a concern that there was insufficient land to support the growing numbers of immigrants without a far greater investment in agriculture. Mr H, Snell, MP, a Labour Party politician, dissented and produced a minority comment arguing the land was capable of sustaining more inhabitants and that no limits be placed on immigration.

The upsurge, which occurred in 1929, was only reversed by the British mobilisation of considerable resources effectively imposing martial law and initiating a regime of blanket repression in the country. The officer commanding the British troops was reported as saying:

> The whole country is disaffected, practically everywhere disorder, or threat of disorder, has occurred, and demands for protection, which cannot be ignored, are still being received by me. Originally, it is true, the trouble was between Jews and Arabs, and not against the government, yet there, is clear evidence that Arabs are now becoming antagonistic to authority if only because their designs are being frustrated, and the tendency is growing.[91]

The British responded much as the French had when they faced the revolt in Syria a few years previously. They mobilised the army, the navy and the Royal Air Force to intervene, sending five warships, three battalions of infantry, one squadron of armed cars (Lancers), two and a half sections of armed cars (RAF), one squadron and a warplane. Troop and police presence was increased and collective fines were imposed on villages from which those arrested originated.

Two distinct features began to emerge in the uprising that broke with previous methods of campaigning for self-determination. The establishment of groups prepared to enter systematically into armed confrontation with the British. The second, and arguably the more important was the appearance

across Palestine of well-organised popular committees with a clear anti-Mandate agenda and linked to the armed uprising. These features, which appeared during the course of the 1929 uprising, were to become a characteristic of Palestinian politics from then on.[92] On 17 January 1930, Sir John Chancellor, the high commissioner, asked the Cabinet to consider amending the Mandate either to place both the Jewish and the Palestinian communities on a similar footing or else to increase the military presence in order to protect the Jews from the inevitable attacks by the majority population.[93] This was not something to which the Labour Party secretary of state for the colonies, Lord Passfield, was prepared to agree.

Within the Palestinian community the divisions were sharpening. Breaking with the lobbying-oriented politics of the *a'yan*-dominated Arab Executive Committee and the Supreme Muslim Council, new parties began to appear which adopted a more explicitly anti-British position. Moreover they began to break with an orientation which had predominantly led to a focus on anti-Zionist and anti-*Yishuv* actions. The significance of the twin developments of anti-British armed struggle and mass popular campaigning was further reflected in the decision of the Nablus MCA in July 1931 to change its name to the Patriotic Arab Association (*al-Jam'iyyah al-'Arabiyyah al-Wataniyyah)*. In addition, and against the express wishes of the Arab Executive Committee, they decided to convene a national conference to discuss strategy.

In October 1931, Sir Arthur Wauchope replaced Sir John Chancellor as high commissioner. The events at the Wailing Wall gained wide attention and resulted in an International Commission of Inquiry conducted by the League of Nations. This moment also saw the emergence of a more explicitly anti-British politics as reflected in the positions adopted by bodies like the *Istiqlal* party. The *Istiqlal* party, founded on 4 August 1932, took a position of intransigent opposition to serving on any bodies established by the British. In September 1932 the party persuaded the Arab Executive to adopt a similar stance despite the inclinations of supporters of both the Mufti and the Nashashibi faction. For their part the Zionist Executive, which had already taken a decision in August 1930 not to cooperate with Chancellor's call for a legislative council, continued to maintain their opposition.

A further attempt to establish a legislative council took place in December 1935, but as with the previous effort in 1929 this was in a very different political context compared to that in which the initial proposals had taken place when Samuel was high commissioner. Preliminary consideration of the proposal was aired on 28 March 1934, in a 'very secret' memorandum written by the Conservative politician Sir Philip Cunliffe-Lister, secretary of state for the colonies.[94] He had wished 'that the proposal [to establish a legislative council]had never been made' but he accepted that it was as a result of undertakings given to the League of Nations' Permanent Mandates Commission. Based on the assumption that the high commissioner would have the last word on any decisions, he saw no real objection but remained fairly sceptical about the advantages of establishing it:

> The Arabs are very insistent that we should carry out these undertakings while at present the Jews are opposed to the setting up of a Legislative Council. … I have made it plain that such a Council could have no executive authority, and that the power of the High Commissioner to ensure the passage of measures which he thinks essential remain unimpaired, and that he would, of course, have the power of veto, which exists in all Colonies. Provided the High Commissioner has these powers, I do not myself attach much importance to an official majority.[95]

His discussion with 'several influential Arabs' led him to believe that the council could be established without too much trouble, although his description of the body differed so little from previous attempts that it is difficult to believe that he had any greater expectation of it being set up than any other previous initiative. Cunliffe-Lister reported, furthermore, that the 'Jews (were) opposed to the setting up of a Legislative Council'.[96] It was a matter of the British being obliged to go through their paces. Whatever the sincerity of the British the proposal for the legislative council went ahead only to be met with rebuttal from another quarter. In response to the uprisings against the British in 1936, the House of Commons, at the instigation of the pro-Zionist MPs, defeated the government proposal to establish a legislative council.

Whilst all these initiatives took place in differing circumstances, the Palestinian verdict on each occasion was to reject structures which they perceived as being designed to thwart any progress towards self-determination. Sections of the leadership, principally though not

exclusively those associated with the Nashashibi-led political current, repeatedly gave their support to the proposals in the first instance. On each occasion Palestinian popular opinion stimulated by events obliged the leaderships to repudiate the idea of a legislative council or forced them to turn away from it.

In spite of the repeated failure of the British Mandate authorities to establish a legislative council this did not prevent the emergence and recognition of Zionist agencies in particular, which took on some of the functions of a state apparatus. From the outset this included most notably the recognition of the role of the Zionist Commission as the authoritative body representing the *Yishuv*.

THE RISE OF NAZISM

The demographics of Palestine were to change dramatically in the 1930s. The rise to power of the Nazis in Germany led to a dramatic increase in the numbers of Jews fleeing persecution, and the numbers seeking to travel to Palestine increased. Despite the pleas for help from the Eighteenth World Zionist Congress meeting in Prague in August 1933, 'Not a single country, great or small, showed any enthusiasm to receive Jews.'[97]

Once again, as in 1924, the USA and other Western European countries imposed quotas, which had the effect of limiting the numbers of Jews permitted entry to their respective countries. Whilst the criteria used were not always explicitly anti-Jewish, nevertheless the formulae used impacted disproportionately on Jews seeking refuge from the Nazis and anti-Semitism. Approximately 40,000 Jews fled Germany between 1933 and 1935, and a further 110,000 fled Poland and other Central European countries, increasing the size of the *Yishuv* to 443,000 or 30 per cent of the total population of Palestine.[98]

The record of the major powers of the day was abysmal. Walter Lacqueur made the point that the British in 1685 had let into the country some 120,000 French Protestants seeking asylum. Up until March 1939, only 19,000 Jewish refugees were given permission to enter. The record of some of the largest countries of the world was as bad: 'The United States in 1935 accepted 6,252 Jewish immigrants, Argentina 3,159, Brazil 1,758, South Africa 1,078, Canada 624. In the same year the number of legal Jewish immigrants into Palestine was 61,854.'[99] There are no figures

available for most other countries including some of the largest in the world such as Australia. The number of those arriving was augmented by those entering illegally, by land and by sea, for which there was no record.

In the main, the new immigrants settled in urban areas, increasing the size of cities like Tel Aviv. According to the official statistics, designating any Jewish immigrant with more than £1,000 as 'capitalists', those so labelled increased as a proportion of immigrants to Palestine.[101] The amount of capital invested in Palestine almost tripled between 1930 and 1939 and the value of production increased nearly fourfold between 1930 and 1938.[102] This strengthened the bourgeoisie within the *Yishuv*, and the increasingly tight application of the policy of *avodha ivrit*, led to a growth of the Jewish working class and a rise in unemployment amongst the Palestinian working class, many of whom had lost their lands in part due to the increased inflow of capital driving the purchase of land.[103] Although initially the policy adopted by bodies like the Jewish National Fund and the Zionist settlers had favoured the purchase of large tracts of land, this pattern began to change. Initial sales of land, as we have noted above, were carried out by absentee landlords like the Sursuqs, but with the reduction of land available from this source, purchasers turned to buying smaller areas of land owned by small-scale Palestinian farmers who had become increasingly indebted because of the fall in the price of their crops.

This economic and social shift impacted on the Palestinians, who became much more conscious of the changing demographics and the potential consequences for their political goal of achieving self-determination. The changes inevitably encouraged the Zionists to put pressure on the British in pursuit of more favourable policies and for the establishment and recognition of proto-state institutions such as the *Haganah*. These developments were inevitably to increase the anxiety of the Palestinians that their chance of achieving their goals were threatened, and no doubt contributed significantly to the search for radical solutions to the problem.

PALESTINE AND THE IMPERIALIST RIVALRY REBORN

Whilst the significance of inter-imperialist rivalry as a factor influencing British policy in the Near East fluctuated in importance it did not recede entirely. Although the consequences of world economic developments have

been touched on, attention needs to be paid to the outstanding territorial ambitions of some countries. Some of the victors were discontented with the outcome of the Paris Peace Conference and subsequent treaties because they felt that they had not benefitted to a level commensurate with their war effort. In the years ahead those who were defeated, like Germany, came to develop a particular form of politics, the consequences of which impacted greatly on the future of Palestine.

British desire to maintain a hegemonic position in relation to Palestine remained as determined as ever. Safe passage for British ships to India coupled with the growing importance of oil discovered in Iraq and elsewhere put pressure on the Whitehall government to view Palestine as of continuing importance in their imperial plans. Italian ambitions to expand beyond Libya into Ethiopia and parts of Somaliland posed the kind of the threat that had resulted from the Ottoman-German alliance. In the early 1930s Germany had not adopted an aggressive attitude towards the British nor exhibited any expansionist ambitions towards the colonies of East Africa. It was now Italy, where Benito Mussolini had been in power since October 1922, that was viewed as the challenger.

Oil remained a major factor governing British policies towards the Arab regions. In 1930 the British navy demanded that, in order to service all vessels, a year's supply of oil should be stockpiled.[104] The discovery of reserves of oil in Iraq enhanced the importance of building of the Baghdad–Haifa Railway, which would facilitate the construction and military protection of an oil pipeline linked to the Mediterranean Sea. The additional advantage of the initiative would be that the shipping costs incurred by travelling through the Suez Canal could be saved.[105] Old rivalries were still viewed as a possible challenge to the operation, with France suspected of harbouring ambitions towards Haifa.

The British government faced a number of challenges arising from events in the wider world. The threats to the British Empire at this time came from Benito Mussolini's Italy and not Germany, since Hitler was for much of the 1930s seeking to establish an alliance with London.[106] The Italian fascist government of Mussolini had, by 1934, established itself in Libya and was in the process of expanding its colonisation, developing roads and rail links to the Egyptian border.[107] Thousands of Italian settler-

colonists had moved into the country and, with subsidies from the state, begun to farm the land.

Additionally, and resurrecting late nineteenth-century Italian policy, Mussolini had the ambition of taking control over Ethiopia and Somalia. The British viewed this as a further threat to the safe passage of their vessels to India through the Red Sea. Ships passing through might become vulnerable to interception by Italian forces, who would be able to close off the seaway at its southern end. The British were also concerned about the vulnerability of Egypt that might arise as a consequence of Italian occupation of the lands to the south. Mussolini's government, aiming to maximise problems for the British, had been in discussion with sections of the Zionists and printed anti-British material which was widely distributed throughout Palestine.[108]

In Egypt in November 1935 there was mounting pressure from mass demonstrations calling for independence that resulted in the election of the *Wafd* party. Any move by the Egyptians – agitating for independence from the British – towards linking up with the Italian regime in Libya would have been another immediate threat to Britain's access to and control over the Suez Canal.[109] As a consequence the British were forced into a round of negotiations on the future of the country, seeking to pacify Egyptian demands for greater independence. In addition they made several attempts to negotiate an agreement between the Italian government and Emperor Haile Selassie, but these ended in failure and in late December 1935 the Italian army launched an invasion of Ethiopia.[110]

In Syria the French were under pressure in January 1936 from a similar wave of militant demonstrations and a two-month-long general strike, which obliged them to enter into negotiations with the rebels. The situation had an added dimension from a Palestinian perspective: the proposal from King Abdullah that Syria and Transjordan should be unified, with himself as king. The suggestion was modified to distinguish between French and British spheres of influence, but nevertheless its realisation would have had the potential to destabilise the political situation in Mandate Palestine.[111]

In addition to these concerns about the political problems of areas surrounding Palestine, the British of course were still focused on their wider imperial objectives. During World War I they were preoccupied by the possible ambitions of Russia with regards to Persia and Afghanistan. That

concern was recast by the advent of the Soviet Revolution of 1917 but remained a matter of importance to the British position in India. In December 1934, the British Cabinet considered a memorandum from Sir Samuel Hoare, secretary of state for India, outlining discussions which had taken place with the government of Afghanistan. The document reassured the Cabinet that the Afghan government were well-disposed towards the British government and that there was 'no present danger of their adopting a pro-Russian policy or entering into any unwise commitment to Russia as a result either of Soviet threats or cajolery.'[112]

BRITISH COMMISSIONS AND REPORTS

Alongside the Shaw Commission of April 1930, it had been agreed that a detailed report on the land situation and the likely impact of continued immigration was required. The report was written by Sir John Hope Simpson and published in October 1930. Hope Simpson concluded that action had to be taken to address the problem of landless Palestinian families. A survey of 104 representative villages concluded that 29.4 per cent of the families, having lost their lands, existed by working 'in the village or outside or in other ways', and that if this percentage were extrapolated to the whole of the country it would be equivalent to around 25,572 families.[113] 'The condition of the Arab *fellah* is little if at all superior to what it was under the Turkish regime.'[114]

The report was referred to a sub-committee of the Cabinet, chaired by Philip Snowden, chancellor of the exchequer in the newly formed national government. The 'Expert Committee' met three times from 18 to 20 September 1930. Having reviewed the costing of Hope Simpson's proposals, Snowden's group endorsed much of what he had highlighted and proposed that:

> the Palestine Administration should take immediate steps (a) to provide by means of legislation that during the next 5 years no further parcels of land shall be acquired by Jewish organisations, in order to give time for the assimilation of the landless Arabs under the policy we recommend, and (b) to restrict the immigration of Jews to such numbers as can be settled on the reserve lands, or can confidently be expected to be absorbed into industrial occupation.

The group warned that, 'If this is not done, we fear that at the end of the five years the position will be no better, and possibly even worse, than it is

at present.'[115]

Lord Passfield, the colonial secretary, produced a White Paper at the same time as the Hope Simpson Report was published. The White Paper was similar to the 1922 Churchill White Paper and the views expressed in the Haycraft Report. On 31 March 1930, a delegation led by Musa Kasem and including Hajj Amin and Nashashibi had met with Prime Minister Ramsey MacDonald and Lord Passfield. Passfield's White Paper reflected the concerns that had been expressed in March, and was submitted to the Cabinet with the Hope Simpson Report appended. The White Paper echoed the views of the Shaw Commission, arguing that it was essential to look at 'the three problems of development, immigration and unemployment'.[116] He sought to put forward a scheme that he believed would demonstrate that the government intended to treat both communities equally and this was coupled with a proposal for a legislative council.[117]

The White Paper produced a strong reaction amongst Zionists. Weizmann, along with others, tendered his resignation from the Jewish Agency on the grounds that Passfield was taking the view that the establishment of a homeland for the Jews was completed.[118] His recommendations were effectively repudiated in January 1931 by Prime Minister MacDonald in a letter to Weizmann. The letter was the product of discussions between civil servants and members of the Jewish Agency even though it bore MacDonald's name.[119] MacDonald, in what he asserted was 'the authoritative interpretation of the White Paper', pointed out that the Passfield White Paper was based on Churchill's document of 1922 and that its commitment was to 'the Jewish people and not only to the Jewish population of Palestine'.[120] Between 1922 and 1931 Jewish immigration had increased by 110 per cent, and in the eyes of Palestinians constituted a major threat to their national aspirations. The letter refused to acknowledge the political rights of the Palestinians and was read by them as a further encouragement to immigrants as it specified that 'the obligation to facilitate Jewish immigration and to encourage close settlement by Jews on land remains a positive obligation of the mandate and it can be fulfilled without prejudice to the rights and positions of other sections of the population of Palestine'.[121]

MacDonald's letter was effusive in its praise for the Jewish Agency but goes beyond that, stating: 'His Majesty's Government also recognizes the

value of the services of labor and trade union organisations in Palestine, to which they desire to give encouragement'. MacDonald emphasised his endorsement of the employment strategy adopted by the Jewish Agency, stating that the 'principle of preferential, and indeed exclusive, employment of Jewish labor by Jewish organizations is a principle which the Jewish Agency are entitled to affirm'. This constituted perhaps the most explicit declaration of support by any British government for the policy of *avodha ivrit* and the discriminatory policies adopted by the *Histadrut*.[122]

The Shaw Report, the Hope Simpson Report and the Passfield White Paper had attempted to address the question of the economic problems of the Palestinian population by proposing to restore some degree of compensation in respect to the rural community in particular. The 'disturbances of August 1929' prompted the government to take a detailed look at the situation in Palestine.[123] The White Paper identified 'land, immigration and unemployment' as the three topics which were 'interrelated, with political as well as economic aspects', and solving these questions was seen as the key to 'peace and prosperity in Palestine'.[124] The solutions offered by the British were continuously couched in terms of managing the flow of immigration and offering some degree of remedial action to improve the plight of landless *fellahin* and their families. There was no recognition that these intractable problems were a consequence of the policies introduced by the British which were destroying the economic and social relations that had been present before their arrival as occupiers.

The underlying political question of what would be the post-Mandate form of government in an independent Palestine was seldom if ever addressed. Unemployment was also widespread in the Palestinian community.[125] The reports to the League of Nations Permanent Mandates Commission echoed the position that there would be no change in respect of immigration, which would continue to be governed by the 1922 White Paper's formula of the 'economic capacity of the country to absorb new arrivals'.[126]

In subsequent years there were further commissions and reports. None of them succeeded in addressing or resolving the fundamental political and economic issues. The contradiction that was at the centre of the Balfour Declaration had practical repercussions in the development of the Palestinian economy which, as the White Paper had stated, were interrelated

and bore political effects too. As world commodity prices tumbled from 1929 to 1931, farmers received less and less for their crops which were in competition with others on the world market. The worsening economic plight of the Palestinian community was exemplified by the increasing numbers of landless labourers taking refuge in the towns and cities hoping to find work. At the same time there was an expansion of the Jewish population, overtaking in some urban areas the numbers of Palestinian inhabitants as increasing numbers of refugees fled the growing anti-Semitism in Germany and parts of Eastern Europe. The apparent inability or reluctance of sections of the leadership of Palestinian society to challenge British policies contributed to the emergence and strengthening of currents which adopted a much more explicitly anti-British stance, having concluded that to achieve self-determination required a direct confrontation with the Mandate forces.

Hostility towards the British began to deepen and broaden. This accelerating radicalisation of opposition to the British administration was not confined to the existing traditional political formations. As we have observed, from the earliest period of the British occupation new social layers came into activity. In a repetition of patterns evident in the 1920s, women began to play an active role in the campaigning, calling a conference in 1929 and a demonstration in April 1933 to protest against the visit of Lord Allenby. Members of the Arab Women's Association (later to be called the Arab Women's Union) built new branches moving out from Jerusalem to engage women in Nablus and elsewhere.[127] They had connections with women's movements in other parts of the world. They were not immune, however, from the differences experienced in other organisations which saw the rift between the *Majlesiyoun* and the *Mu'arada*.

Youth organisations began to expand. The first Congress of Arab Youth was held in Jaffa in January 1932, electing Issa al-Bandak as the president of its National Executive Committee. Youth once again came to the fore in setting up national committees which sought to coordinate the resistance against the British forces. In the expansion of youth organisations new bodies were established, some of which, like the Youth Troops, were influenced by fascist youth groups.[128] The Arab Young Men's Association (*Jam'iyyat al-Shubban al'Arab*) was established in July 1931 at a congress in Nablus attended by over 300 people. Some advocated military training

for the Boy Scout troops.[129] A feature of the growth of these bodies and the emergence of more youthful activists was that they were frequently from cities other than Jerusalem.[130]

The plight of landless *fellahin* and unemployed workers began to have significance in the development of the political discourse in Palestine. This led to the increasing involvement of unemployed workers and those who came from the ranks of the landless *fellahin* in political activity, alongside the developing new middle class social layers. The composition of those who took part in the 1935 and 1936 armed revolts against the British included former railway workers, teachers, merchants, clerks at the Jerusalem Sharia Court, labourers, porters from Haifa harbour and members of urban notable families.[131] It also manifested itself in the emergence of more socially conscious politics. An example of the awareness of what was taking place in Palestinian society was reflected in the views expressed by at least one of the new political formations, the *Istiqlal* (Independence) party, which took an explicitly militant stance. The new party considered the failure to date to be the product of the 'egocentric and self-interested political notables who were subservient to the imperialist rulers'.[132]

The economic situation and the lack of any significant political change of circumstances led increasing numbers of Palestinian people towards a break with the political practices of the preceding decade. It was this sharpening political and social differentiation which led to the 1936–9 *thawra* (Arab Revolt), in which the repression unleashed by the British replayed the tactics of collective punishment, military repression, exile and intimidation in order to suppress a nationwide uprising expressing a desire for self-determination. The *thawra* went through stages, but it was testimony to the depth of opposition to the Mandate that the British forces in Palestine were obliged to call on considerable reserves in order to thwart the ambitions of the Palestinian people to assert their right to self-determination.

6

The Mandate in Context

There are many ways in which the Balfour Declaration can be read and analysed historically. The text itself and the many documents relating to the history of the British occupation of Palestine provide an abundance of information revealing the reasoning behind the decisions of successive British governments. This book has attempted to look at the policymaking process by governments and to examine the context within which their decisions were implemented.

Economic, social and political relations impacted on the conduct of the Mandate administration and the responses of the Palestinian community. The framing reference was that of the inter-imperialist rivalry which developed though the end of the nineteenth century and resulted in its sharpest expression in World War I. British imperialism at the time of the occupation of Palestine and throughout the Mandate period was influenced by the interplay of a combination of factors. The Palestinian people and the Zionist settlers were both affected by international, regional, national and communal factors. Whilst the encounter between these groups can be evaluated by an examination of the public records, an exploration of the social and economic context which formed the parameters within which this dialectic developed provides an invaluable insight into the forces at work.

The preceding centuries of Ottoman rule, the British invasion and occupation of Palestine, the inter-imperialist rivalry, the growing Palestinian desire for self-determination, the anti-Semitism within Europe and the

revivalist nationalism of Zionist politics, were just some of the elements which came to produce the unique conjuncture of the Mandate period. Each of these developments took place at different speeds, having their own specific asymmetrical consequences on the British, the Palestinians and the Zionist settlers.

The nature of the imperialism which emerged at the end of the nineteenth century had features which distinguished it from earlier forms of colonial-imperialism and had an effect on the way British policies were implemented and developed. The territorialism and colonialism which had characterised the imperialism of the seventeenth, eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were, from the end of the nineteenth century onwards, supplanted by the ascendancy of finance capital. Conquest of lands and colonisation gave way to a global competition for markets, the creation of trade monopolies, control over raw materials and the necessary protection of the lines of communication. A characteristic and driving force of these changes was the materialising of powerful economic institutions produced through the fusion of the most aggressive and expansionist components of industrial and financial development. The functioning of these institutions, especially in the realm of overseas investments, was buttressed by the mobilisation of their respective nation-states to achieve or enforce their goals.[1] In some instances the establishment of clientelistic relationships with an indigenous ruling class obviated the need for a more direct intervention and colonisation.

Some, though admittedly not all, of these features affected the development of British policies in respect of the Near East and Palestine. Palestine was a focus of attention for British imperialism for a number of reasons. An interpretation of the Balfour Declaration which restricts itself to the formal exchanges between the British and the Zionist movement, whilst illuminating, will only shed a partial light on the significance of the declaration and what took place during the Mandate period. Importantly, it plays into a narrative which excludes the Palestinians as agents in their own history. The Palestinians had much to say about the destiny of their lands, not only during the British occupation, but in the many years prior to that happening.

There was no inevitability about the way in which events unfolded, but it is essential to appreciate the overall balance of forces in assessing the role of the individual agencies. British imperialism was, at the time of the

occupation, the foremost power in the world – able to dictate, by force of arms when it chose, Palestine's destiny. The nature of its rule was not simply one of military conquest and political domination, occupation and subjugation of a peoples, but it extended into the economic sphere with ramifications in the field of social relations too. This multifaceted intrusion, dislocating and destroying existing relationships whilst foisting new ones on Palestinian society, had consequences on the emergence and growth of a political response. In the economic field this had major repercussions. Unlike in other imperial contexts this happened in a relatively short space of time.

The inter-imperialist rivalry that erupted during World War I continued even though no physical conflict took place. The absence of any Palestinian contender for the exploitation of the chemical rights of the Dead Sea was the consequence of their exclusion by the British. Palestinian entrepreneurs fully appreciated the potential of the Dead Sea chemical resources and regarded the transfer of the lands surrounding the area to companies which were owned by members of the Jewish community as both an economic blow to the development of Palestine and an assault on their national rights. Palestinian entrepreneurs were as prepared as their counterparts in the *Yishuv* and those sponsored by the Zionist movement to identify those elements of the economy which would be strategic to the overall development of the country.

Under the terms of the League of Nations Mandate, the British government was supposed to ensure that bids to invest and create new industries were dealt with equitably. Even though the British held the Mandate for Palestine they had to contend with ongoing rivalry with their imperialist ally and the occasional intervention of foreign governments on behalf of citizens of their countries, who claimed they had prior consideration in the awarding of contracts by dint of agreements reached with the Ottoman rulers before the war. The handling of the Rutenberg scheme, which created a monopolistic enterprise, epitomised British partisanship in respect of major capital investment projects in Palestine. Although the scheme for electrification had been promised prior to the war to a Greek entrepreneur, M. Mavrommatis, the British intervened to award the concession to Pinhas Rutenberg.[2] Similarly, in the case of the concession for the development of the Dead Sea's chemical resources the British backed the Palestine Potash Limited company against the *Syndicat*

Français des Potasses de la Mer Morte, which had the backing of the French government.

Ideological rationalisations for conquest, drawing on the justifications used by More, Grotius, Hobbes and Locke, had long been utilised to account for British imperialist expansionism. They were now being augmented by notions of racial and cultural superiority blended with quasi-scientific rationalisations mobilised in justification of colonial political practice. The *mission civilisatrice*, in effect a secularised version of the quasi-religious undertaking of conversion of the non-believer to Christianity, was interwoven anew with Christian restorationism.

The imperialist conquests did not go uncontested. In the second half of the nineteenth century new nation-states were coming into being in Europe and yet more, in parts of the Ottoman Empire, sought to assert their right to independence. At the same time countries less dominant than Britain, such as Italy and France, sought to establish themselves as imperial powers through the colonisation of parts of the former Ottoman Empire in North Africa. Both colonialism and colonisation existed side by side. Simultaneous to this maelstrom of continuing imperialist expansionism and growing nationalism, the Zionist response to the horrors of the pogroms rampant in Eastern Europe emerged. At the same time the governments of numerous countries, well able to provide safe havens for Jewish refugees, used a variety of means to restrict the entry of those fleeing the pogroms. On a number of occasions laws were specifically introduced, in both Britain and the USA, imposing limits which particularly restricted the numbers of Jews entering the respective countries.[3] Anti-Semitism was well established in both countries.

The Zionist concept of ‘chosenness’, employed to argue the case for the establishment of a homeland for the Jews in Palestine, melded with the assumptions of racial and cultural superiority prevalent amongst many leading non-Jewish political figures like Winston Churchill. In a statement to the 1937 *Palestine Royal Commission* (Peel Commission) he said:

> I do not admit that the dog in the manger has the final right to the manger even though he may have lain there for a very long time … I do not admit, for instance, that a great wrong has been done to the Red Indians of America, or the black people of Australia. I do not admit that a wrong has been done to those people by the fact that a stronger race, a higher grade race, or, at any rate, a more worldly-wise race, to put it that way, has come and taken their place.[4]

Non-Jewish adherents were won from the ranks of those who combined anti-Semitism with support for the Zionist cause, no doubt in the hope, or belief, that the persecuted Jews of Eastern Europe would choose Palestine as an alternative to their own countries. Their hierarchical ranking placed the peoples of the Arab world of the Near East below those of Western Europe and the USA, thus dismissing the entitlement of those who inhabited Palestine to the right to self-determination. The imperial powers were to be the sole arbiters of a people's fitness to become a sovereign country. In the most grotesque manifestation of imperialist supremacy, European powers carried out the forced transfer of peoples and genocidal practices on a wide scale. On the continents of America, Africa, Asia and Australia imperial expansion resulted in the indiscriminate killing of indigenous peoples and compulsory movement from their lands.

The period within which the British government established the Mandate in Palestine constituted a moment in which the nature of imperialism was undergoing profound changes, moving from a time in which it was typified by the use of colonisation as its defining characteristic to one in which the expansion of overseas investment was to become the dominant characteristic. The last quarter of the nineteenth century had seen the rapid escalation of inter-imperialist rivalry resulting from the aggressive competition for dominance over markets and increasingly important raw materials. The attempts by the rival imperial powers, through initiatives such as the Berlin Conference of 1884, to reach accommodations about existing points of contention and to anticipate future areas of disagreement, simply covered up the underlying dynamic at the centre of the changes taking place within the economies of the contestants.

Britain and Germany, the two major contending imperial powers, sought to co-opt regional forces into their strategic perspectives. In both cases the interests of those with whom they sought to ally were in practice made subservient to the objectives of the imperial hegemon. Both Britain and Germany were capable of deploying religious and secular apologetics in an effort to gain advantage. The Germans and the British competed at different stages for the allegiance of both Muslims and Zionists, presenting their motives in terms of assisting the fulfilment of religious goals. The political leadership in Germany sought to invoke the concept of *jihad* with the rulers of the Ottoman Empire in order to mobilise, behind their war effort, the peoples of countries with predominantly Muslim populations. British

politicians summoned up a particular Christian biblical narrative to justify their support for the Zionist project of creating a homeland for the Jews in Palestine.

The nature of the intervention by the imperial power was ultimately shaped by factors on the domestic front. The capacity of the British to act on the international level was shaped by the impact of the war on the home front and the challenge presented by the struggle for independence taking place in Ireland. During the war, Britain's dependency on the USA for material and financial support to prosecute the conflict increased. The Cabinet discussions on the situation in Ireland revealed the extent of US influence on British policies towards Ireland. The 1916 Easter Rising, like the 1857 uprising in India, was a harbinger of the anti-colonial and anti-imperialist challenge which was to follow the war as British governments faced tests in the Near East. Domestic and the imperial policies were inextricably linked, and the Cabinet papers reveal how discussions by the political leadership in Britain reflected the changing relationships between Britain and other imperial powers, and between Britain and its empire.

The type of imperialism which was rapidly emerging as a dominant international economic force was manifest in the changing priorities of British governments. They now viewed the acquisition of and jurisdiction over valuable raw materials as the essential focus. Where those raw materials were located in turn informed their strategic military thinking. In the British Cabinet the debate over the approach to the Near East welded together economic, political and military considerations. Control over the Suez Canal constituted a concern which embodied all of these priorities. The canal was the principal route through which communications might be maintained between London and the British Empire, most notably India which remained amongst its most lucrative possessions. The importance of the Suez Canal was fully appreciated by both German strategists and British politicians. Moreover, British apprehensions about the potential vulnerability of India to Russian encroachment through Afghanistan or Persia made the Near East a particular strategic anxiety. Control over the lands of the Near East was crucial to maintain the capacity to deliver reinforcements by the swiftest means possible. Additionally, large volumes of trade passed through the Suez Canal on British ships, which constituted more than half of the world's vessels. It remained vital to the supply and

maintenance of Britain's capacity to defend its imperial territories both from external threats and from internal rebellion.

Through the period of imperialist territorial expansion, inter-imperialist rivalries manifested themselves in periodic military confrontations, but the ascent of the new forms of economic development embodied in the establishment of a globalised market created new challenges. The British imperialist concern to maintain their hegemonic position with regard to the empire, and especially India, dictated their preoccupation with the Near East. This resulted, however, in a clash between agencies with differing economic and political priorities. Those predominantly pre-capitalist economies, like that of Ottoman Palestine, were confronted by an increasingly aggressive capitalist expansion which distorted and disfigured their economic and social evolution and concomitantly their political development. The finance capital-backed enterprises, like the Rutenberg scheme, had greater access to inward capital investment, grew more rapidly and became more profitable than the predominantly agriculturally oriented indigenous capitalist companies focused on trade.

President Woodrow Wilson applied the concept of self-determination differentially, passively endorsing British unilateral arbitration over the appropriateness of self-determination in the case of Palestine. Wilson's own dubious credentials as an anti-colonialist were undermined by his own practices and willingness to employ imperial prerogatives in the case of the settlements emanating from the Paris Peace Conference. The findings of the King–Crane Commission, which conducted widespread consultations with people in the region, came to conclusions which were clearly contrary to the intentions of the British government and indeed questioned the presumptions of the French. The views expressed in their canvass of opinion were both informed and consistent, indicating a clear wish to break with the proposed allocation of Mandates by the Supreme Council of the Allies at San Remo on 25 April 1920.

The *a'yan*-dominated Palestinian political leadership's response to the British occupation and imposition of the Mandate was to seek to insert themselves in the same privileged position that they had been accustomed to in the Ottoman Empire. The British continuously sought to coax the Palestinians into formal or informal relationships with the Mandate administration, with the objective of reducing their opposition to the Zionist colonisation of Palestine and persuading them to become complicit in

compromising their aspirations for self-determination. The pattern of social and economic development had a distorting impact on the evolution of the Palestinian society and economy. An economically less competitive agriculture-oriented capitalism disadvantaged the *a'yan* capitalists and contributed to the creation of a landless working class confronted by discriminatory employment practices enforced by Zionist corporatism. This dislocation of a Palestinian society, developing at a slower pace, in turn led to the social and economic differentiations being expressed in divergent political positions. The sections of the *a'yan* group themselves were obliged to come to terms with this process of change dispensing with the traditionalist hereditary structures of alignment and moving towards the formation of political parties.

The decisions of the Palestinian congresses reflected the splits between the two dominant constituencies of Palestinian political thinking. There were those who, broadly speaking, were prepared to acquiesce to an alignment with the British in the hope of making progress towards self-determination, whilst those who saw this as doomed to failure rejected this strategy. Attempts were made to construct a programme to unify Palestinian society, but in the face of British intransigence and military might these endeavours were prevented from developing an adequate cohesion, mass support and unity to challenge the occupying power. A significant shift did occur when a turn took place away from a predominantly anti-Zionist orientation towards a recognition that the principal obstacle to the achievement of self-determination was British imperialism. The combination in the 1936–9 period of popular national committees based in the cities, villages and towns, and mass popular mobilisations linked to a determined armed struggle, represented perhaps the most coherent attempt by the Palestinian people to overthrow British rule.

Palestinian society, at the beginning of the twentieth century, was confronted by dramatic world-changing events with social, economic and political ramifications. These events shaped the Palestinian political response to the British Mandate. Palestinian society was in many respects unlike many other countries which the British had occupied and appropriated to their imperial domain, because it was to some extent already becoming a part of the wider world economy and had the capacity to continue to develop. Its economic, social and political progress was shaped by the constraints imposed upon it by British imperialism's primary

concern to secure its goal of preserving its own empire. This centred on its preoccupation with the Near East and the Suez Canal. This focus was evident before the adoption of the Balfour Declaration and was to resurface during the 1930s as the inter-imperialist rivalry reappeared. In the first instance the Zionist project was an adjunct to British imperialism's main concerns, although this was never the view held by the Zionists themselves.

Elements of the social, economic and political features, which had shaped the process of the British occupation and the initiation of the Mandate, remained operative throughout the period. Developments in the wider world in this period continued to impact on Palestinian society as the *fellahin* suffered greater impoverishment with the devastation of their crops, the fierce competition of imported goods and the application of partisan economic measures by the British administration favouring Zionist-owned enterprises. The Hope Simpson Report recorded the impoverishment of rural areas, resulting from the vulnerability of those who worked there coupled with the precariousness faced by the landless workers forced to gravitate towards the larger towns for employment. The Palestinian response initially manifested itself through a focus on opposition to Jewish immigration and the sale of lands as the manifest evidence of the denial of self-determination. This was the basis of the inchoate politics which culminated in periodic demonstrations and outbreaks of violence resulting in the deaths and injuries to Jews and Palestinians. The founding of the *Istiqlal* party signalled a break with this politics and a sharper focus on the responsibility of the British as the principal authors of the situation.

An examination of the discussions and decision making which took place within the cabinets of the period exposes the thinking and methodology behind the responses of successive British governments. The white papers that were produced and the various reports commissioned by governments into the major events of the period glaringly exposed the contradictory character of the Balfour declaration. Within the British government it was clearly the case that they viewed the future of Palestine as a strategic question to the empire as a whole. Moreover, there was an awareness of the contradictory implications of the Balfour Declaration and knowledge of the likely response of both the Palestinian population and the Zionist settlers to the actions of the Mandate administration. Any notion that the British governments were unaware of the realities of the situation in

Palestine or ignorant of the consequences of the policies they were promoting would be completely false.

The Mandate has to be situated within that wider context of global political and economic developments, and this affords a new perspective on the political processes unfolding in Palestine during the period. Choices by all parties, but especially the Palestinians, did not take place in a vacuum but were influenced by a variety of factors, many though not all of which were beyond their control. A re-examination of them will contribute to the deepening of an understanding as to how and why events developed in Palestine in the way they did. However, the inescapable conclusion remains that British self-interest was at the centre of decision making by the one agent that had the capacity to transform the situation. Imperialist self-interest authored the Balfour Declaration and created the Mandate.

The British set out to use a surrogate settler community to secure a land base from which to manage their interests in the Near East and protect their lifeline to the empire in East Africa and India. The contradictions created by the Balfour Declaration remain as much of a challenge today as they did when it was adopted by the British Cabinet in November 1917.

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Notes

INTRODUCTION

1 Although the term ‘Near East’ has been used throughout this text, the terms ‘Western Asia’, ‘South-west Asia’ and ‘South-western Asia’ are also used to describe the same geographical area. Nomenclature is an important consideration. Whilst recognising that these are disputed questions I have used terms which reflect the most common usage. The Arab peoples of the Palestine Mandate area considered themselves at this time to be part of Greater Syria. I use the term ‘Palestine’ to refer to what became the occupied Mandate territory and ‘Palestinian’ to refer to both the Muslim and Christian people who lived in it. The term *Yishuv* applies to the whole of the Jewish community in Palestine including non-Zionist and Zionist, Mizrahi, Sephardi and Ashkenazi Jews.

2 Hannah Arendt, in *Imperialism: Part Two of The Origins of Totalitarianism* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1967), identifies the period between 1884 and 1914. J.A. Hobson, in *Imperialism* (Nottingham: Spokesman, 2011 [1902]), cites 1870 as ‘the beginning of a conscious policy of Imperialism’, although he qualifies this by adding that ‘the movement did not attain its full impetus until the middle of the eighties’. V.I. Lenin, in his work *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1986 [1917]), placed the significant point of change as taking place from the second half of the 1890s onwards. Drawing radically different conclusions to the other authors cited about the consequences of imperialism, Niall Ferguson, in his work *Empire: How Britain Made the Modern World* (London: Penguin Books, 2004), nevertheless also singles out the end of the nineteenth century as signalling a departure from earlier times.

3 Hobson, *Imperialism;* Lenin, *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism*.

4 Irfan Habib, *Essays in Indian History* (London: Anthem Press, 2002), 319. Habib expands on this point in his essay ‘Understanding 1857’, in *Rethinking 1857*, ed., Sabyasachi Bhattacharya (Hyderabad: Orient Longman, 2007), 58.

5 Based on statistics in Angus Maddison, *The World Economy: Historical Statistics* (Paris: OECD, 2003), 32.

6 Based on statistics in Maddison, *The World Economy: Historical Statistics*, 47–8 and 84.

7 There is a wide-ranging debate on the subject of imperialism evident from even a brief list of the literature: Hobson, *Imperialism;* Rudolf Hilferding, *Finance Capital: A Study of the Latest Phase of Capitalist Development*, ed., Tom Bottomore (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981

[1910]); Lenin, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism;* Hannah Arendt, *Imperialism, Part Two of 'The Origins of Totalitarianism';* P.J. Cain and A.G. Hopkins, *British Imperialism: Innovation and Expansion, 1688–1914* (London: Longman, 1993) and *British Imperialism: Crisis and Deconstruction 1914–1990* (New York: Longman, 1993); Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Vintage, 1994); Ellen Meiksins Wood, *Empire of Capital* (London: Verso, 2003); David Harvey, *The New Imperialism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); Ferguson, *Empire: How Britain Made the Modern World;* Alex Callinicos, *Imperialism and Global Political Economy* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009); Richard Gott, *Britain's Empire: Resistance, Repression and Revolt* (London: Verso, 2011).

8 Cain and Hopkins, *British Imperialism: Innovation and Expansion, 1688–1914*, 409.

9 Ferguson, *Empire: How Britain Made the Modern World*, 244.

10 Roger Adelson, *London and the Invention of the Middle East: Money, Power and War 1902–1922* (New Have: Yale University Press, 1995), 72.

11 Barbara J. Smith, *The Roots of Separatism in Palestine: British Economic Policy 1920–1929* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1993), 29.

12 James Retallack, *Imperial German 1871–1918* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 74.

13 Ibid., 73.

14 Lenin, *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism*, 116.

15 Stephen Broadberry and Mark Harrison, eds., *The Economics of World War I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 206.

16 B.R. Mitchell, *British Historical Statistics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011 [1988]), 478–9.

17 Cain and Hopkins, *British Imperialism: Innovation and Expansion*, 409.

18 Glen Balfour-Paul, 'Britain's Informal Empire in the Middle East', in *The Oxford History of the British Empire, Volume IV*, eds., Judith M. Brown and Wm. Roger Louis (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 493. See also Niall Ferguson, *The House of Rothschild: The World's Banker 1849–1999* (London: Penguin, 2000), 355, for an account of the links between banks and extractive industries.

19 Exports from Palestine, especially agricultural produce, expanded in the period 1880–1913. See Roger Owen, *The Middle East in the World Economy, 1800–1914* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2009), 264.

20 The National Archives (TNA): Public Record Office (PRO): CAB 24/157. The large US-based company Standard Oil did however conduct 'a geological survey of the Dead Sea area and areas west and south-west of it'. British Empire Report No. 73, 5 July 1922. Others had searched for mineral deposits which were to become important. All future citations refer to the Cabinet papers as CAB.

21 Barbara J. Smith, *The Roots of Separatism in Palestine*, 20–5.

22 India at this time included what is now Pakistan and Bangladesh.

23 Ibid., 90.

24 James Barr, *A Line in the Sand* (London: Simon & Schuster, 2011), 154

25 Ibid., 163.

26 CAB 24/198.

27 Lorenzo Veracini, *Israel and Settler Society* (London: Pluto Press, 2006), citing D.K. Fieldhouse, *Colonialism, 1870–1945: An Introduction* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1981). See also Lorenzo Veracini, *Settler Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010) and Patrick Wolfe, *Settler Colonialism and the Transformation of Anthropology* (London: Cassell, 1999).

28 Lenin, *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism*, 82.

29 Kwame Nkrumah, *Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1965), Introduction.

30 Alexander Schölch, *Palestine in Transformation, 1856–1882: Studies in Social, Economic and Political Development* (Washington: Institute for Palestine Studies, 2006). See especially Chapter 5 for a discussion of the use of the term 'feudal' in the context of Palestine and the Ottoman Empire.

1. WAR, EMPIRE AND PALESTINE

1 Cain and Hopkins, *British Imperialism: Innovation and Expansion, 1688–1914* (London: Longman, 1993).
2 Robert Holland, 'The British Empire and the Great War 1914–1918', in *The Oxford History of the British Empire, Volume IV*, ed. Judith M. Brown and Wm. Roger Louis (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 114.
3 Ibid., table 1.1, 8.
4 Holland, 'The British Empire and the Great War 1914–1918', 117.
5 Cain and Hopkins, *British Imperialism: Innovation and Expansion*, 50. Ferguson, *Empire: How Britain Made the Modern World*, 303; Holland, 'The British Empire and the Great War 1914–1918', 117.
6 Stephen Broadberry and Peter Howlitt, 'The United Kingdom During World War I: Business as Usual?', in *The Economics of World War I*, ed. Broadberry and Harrison (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 210.
7 Ibid., 220.
8 Francesco Galassi and Mark Harrison, 'Italy at War: 1915–1918', in *The Economics of World War I*, ed. Broadberry and Harrison, 281.
9 Mitchell, *British Historical Statistics*, 168–9.
10 Ibid., 726. See also Stephen Broadberry and Peter Howlitt, 'The United Kingdom during World War 1: business as usual?', 207.
11 Angus Maddison, *Phases of Capitalist Development* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 39. In the opinion of Maddison economic 'leadership passed to the USA in 1890'.
12 CAB 23/4, 13 December 1917. As an example – the minutes list 19 additional people in attendance.
13 CAB 23/44A.
14 Holland, 'The British Empire and the Great War 1914–1918', 125.
15 Liberal Party, the Conservative Party, Liberal Unionists, the Labour Party, military figures and administrators attended its meetings. The Labour Party members were Arthur Henderson and George Barnes.
16 CAB 23/4, 19 December 1917 item 1 'The Western Front'. See for example War Cabinet Minutes for 1916–17 which contained items ranging across a wide variety of issues – for example: Western Front; Arab Revolt; Ireland; industrial action by workers; Conscription; Russian revolution; influence of the Irish situation on Australia's support for the war; financial relationship with the United States; German peace soundings; coal for Italy; rifles for Rumania.
17 CAB 23/4, War Cabinet 288, 30 November 1917.
18 George Dangerfield, *The Strange Death of Liberal England* (London: Paladin, Reprinted 1988), 342.
19 CAB 23/05, WC 310, 1 January 1918. A meeting at 6:30 pm dealt solely with a discussion on the 'Labour Situation' making clear that events in Russia and Italy had caused the problems. See also Albrecht Ritschl, 'The pity of peace: Germany's economy at war, 1914–1918', in *The Economics of World War I*, eds. Broadberry and Harrison, 57.
20 CAB 23/4.
21 CAB 23.
22 CAB 23, 9th December, 1916 item 5.
23 CAB 24/38, 'Report from the Ministry of Labour for the Week ending 9 January, 1918.'

24 CAB 23/4, War Cabinet 297, 13th December, 1917, 2–7 passim.
25 Matthew E. Plowman, 'Irish Republicans and the Indo-German Conspiracy of World War 1', *New Hibernia Review* 7/3, 2003.
26 George Dangerfield, *The Strange Death of Liberal England*. Charles Townshend, *Easter 1916: The Irish Rebellion* (London: Allen Lane, 2005).
27 Deirdre McMahon 'Ireland and the Empire Commonwealth, 1900–1948', in *The Oxford History of the British Empire Volume IV*, ed. Judith M. Brown and Wm. Roger Louis (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 138. The Home Rule Act or the Government of Ireland Act 1914 granted a degree of autonomy to Ireland establishing a bicameral parliament with powers to deal with most national matters. Passed in the House of Commons it was blocked on three occasions by the House of Lords.
28 Townshend, *Easter 1916*, 28. The total population of Ireland was in the region of 4,500,000.
29 CAB 23/1.
30 See for example Townshend, *Easter 1916*, 32. Deirdre McMahon, 'Ireland and the Empire Commonwealth, 1900–1948', 141.
31 CAB 23/1, War Cabinet 14, 21 December, 1916.
32 CAB 23/1, War Cabinet 14, 21 December, 1916, 46.
33 CAB 23/3, War Cabinet 190, 19 July, 1917, 7. Appendix 11 note by Mr. Duke, 11 July 1917.
34 Howard Zinn, *A People's History of the United States* (New York: HarperCollins, 1999), 362.
35 A.J. Stockwell, 'Imperialism and Nationalism in South East Asia', in *The Oxford History of the British Empire Volume IV*, ed. Judith M. Brown and Wm. Roger Louis, (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 466.
36 Ibid., 1.
37 CAB 24/1. See also CAB 24/1/0014. Note by the Secretary M.P.A. Hankey 17 March 1915.
38 CAB 24/1, 3.
39 Ibid., 3.
40 Ibid., Para 30. This was still under discussion in 1929. See CAB 24/205.
41 CAB 24/1.
42 CAB 42/3/12 (Pages unnumbered – maps follow page 34.)
43 CAB 42/3/12. *Committee of Imperial Defense, Asiatic Turkey*, 30 June 1915.
44 Ibid., Para. 6.
45 Ibid., Para. 4.
46 Ibid., Para. 10.
47 Ibid., Para. 11.
48 Ibid., Para. 12.
49 Ibid., Para. 46.
50 Roger Owen, *The Middle East in the World Economy 1800–1914* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1981), 127. Ferguson, *The House of Rothschild*, 322.
51 Cain and Hopkins, *British Imperialism: Innovation and Expansion*, 364.
52 Ibid., 388.
53 Malcolm Yapp, *The Making of the Modern Near East 1792–1923* (Harlow: Pearson Education, 1987), 226.
54 CAB 37/123/43 Herbert Samuel expressed this view in his paper *The Future of Palestine*.
55 Sean McMeekin, *The Berlin-Baghdad Express, The Ottoman Empire and Germany's Bid for World Power, 1898–1918* (London: Penguin Books, 2010), 11.
56 Yapp, *The Making of the Modern Near East*, 73.
57 CAB 24/1, *Alexandretta and Mesopotamia*, Memorandum by Lord Kitchener, 16 March 1915, 2. See Sykes–Picot agreement, which emphasised importance of Alexandretta and Haifa as ports for British use. George Antonius, *The Arab Awakening: The Story of the Arab National Movement* (Phoenix: Simon Publications, 2001 [1939]), 428.

58 Irfan Habib, *Indian Economy 1858–1914* (New Delhi: Tulika Books, 2006), 126.
59 CAB 24/86, 228.
60 Ibid.
61 Ibid.
62 Habib, *Indian Economy 1858–1914*, 35. Table 2.6.
63 Cain and Hopkins, *British Imperialism: Innovation and Expansion, 1688–1914*, 181. See also Niall Ferguson, *Empire*, 306.
64 CAB 24/95. Page 26. Appendix to Minutes of the Third Meeting. French Note.
65 Daniel Yergin, *The Prize: The Epic Quest for Oil, Money and Power* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1991), 151.
66 CAB 24/95. Anglo-French Conference on the Turkish Settlement, 22 December 1919. Oil was also a matter of discussion between the British and the French. See 'Arab Countries', 23. (File page 261).
67 CAB 24/14, 3 (also listed as 126).
68 Ibid.
69 India at this time meaning India, Pakistan and Bangladesh with their significant Muslim populations. For on-going concerns about the impact of the war on India see also CAB 23/14/0002 (secret document dated 27 March 1918). Matthew E. Plowman, 'Irish Republicans and the Indo-German Conspiracy of World War I', *New Hibernia Review* 7/3, 2003, 81. The emergence of anti-British nationalist movements was a real concern. See for example links established between Indian and Irish nationalists with support from the Germans.
70 CAB 24/14, 4.
71 Ronald Hyam, 'The British Empire in the Edwardian Era', in *The Oxford History of the British Empire Volume IV*, ed. Judith M. Brown and Wm. Roger Louis (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 56.
72 CAB 24/14, 4.
73 Ibid., 4.
74 CAB 24/14.
75 CAB 24/143, 1 (also listed as 246).
76 Charles D. Smith, *Palestine and the Arab–Israeli Conflict [Sixth Edition]* (Boston: Bedford/St Martin's, 2007), 59.
77 Glen Balfour-Paul, 'Britain's Informal Empire in the Middle East', in *The Oxford History of the British Empire Volume IV*, ed. Judith M. Brown and Wm. Roger Louis (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 493.
78 Barr, *A Line in the Sand*, 66. According to Barr it was the Managing Director of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company who was responsible for recommending the northern border of Palestine. (see 90).
79 McMeekin, *The Berlin-Baghdad Express*, See especially Chapter 19. 'Consolation Prize? The Race for Baku.'
80 CAB 24/95.
81 CAB 24/95, 22.
82 See Robert Kubicek 'British Expansion, Empire, and Technological Change', in *The Oxford History of the British Empire Volume III*, ed. Andrew Porter (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999). Lenin quotes statistics on the expansion of railways. Lenin, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, 63.
83 CAB 24/95, 28. Second Part of French Note of December 12, 1919.
84 CAB 24/14.
85 Ibid., 1.
86 Ibid., 6.
87 Ibid.

88 Ibid., 3.
89 Ibid., 3. Germany had formally held territories in East Africa but had ceded these to Britain in the Anglo-German Agreement of 1890.
90 CAB 24/143.
91 Ibid., 1.
92 Ibid. For a lengthier exposition of this issue see also McMeekin, *The Berlin-Baghdad Express*. Please note although authors use different spellings I have standardised all spellings as 'Sharif'.
93 CAB 24/23.
94 Ibid., 11. and Ibid., 7.
95 Ibid., 5.
96 Ibid., 18.
97 CAB 24/23, 9.
98 In the post-war polarisation fascism too secured a major victory in Italy with the election of Benito Mussolini a former socialist promoting a corporatist perspective.
99 Eugene Rogan, *The Fall of the Ottomans:The Great War in the Middle East 1914–1920* (New York: Basic Books, 2015), 357.
100 E.H. Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution 1917–1923, Vol. 3* (London: Penguin Books, 1953), 95.
101 CAB 23/35. (*Conference of Ministers on Miscellaneous Matters. S. Series Volume I*). See also HC Deb 13 November 1919 vol 121 cc 469–77.
102 Ibid. 'Russia' here is a clear reference to the anti-Bolshevik forces. The French too were in a similarly weak position and were proposing to seek economic help from the USA. (See CAB 23/35, Notes of a Conversation between the Prime Minister and M. Loucheur, 3 December 1919).
103 CAB 24/1/0046.
104 Ibid., 4.
105 Ibid., 2.
106 CAB 24/143, 2.
107 CAB 23/35 See also point reiterated by deputation of Indian Muslims on 24 March 1921 emphasising that the 'King Emperor was the largest Mohammedan ruler in the world' governing 'as much as one fourth'.
108 McMeekin, *The Berlin–Baghdad Express*. 90.
109 Judith M. Brown, 'India', in *The Oxford History of the British Empire Volume IV* ed. Judith M. Brown, and Wm. Roger Louis (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 434.
110 CAB 24/143.
111 There is substantial evidence to suggest that the Germans were simultaneously developing their *Drang nach Osten* policy through an orientation to Islam. McMeekin, *The Berlin–Baghdad Express*.
112 Ibid. See also Walter Laqueur, *The History of Zionism* (London:Tauris Parke Paperbacks, 2003 [Third Edition]), 143.
113 Ibid. See also CAB 24/144. The British had a presence on either side of the southern end of the Red Sea. Aden was at this period a responsibility of the India Office and Somaliland was from 1905 administered by the Colonial Office.
114 Ibid.
115 CAB 24/148, 218.
116 John Marlowe, *The Seat of Pilate* (London: Cresset Press, 1959), 1.
117 CAB 24/148, 217.
118 McMeekin, *The Berlin–Baghdad Express*, 89.
119 Ibid.
120 McMeekin, *The Berlin–Baghdad Express*, 10.
121 Lacqueur, 172.

122 Ibid., 174.
123 Nur Masalha, *The Bible and Zionism, Invented Traditions, Archeology and Post-Colonialism in Israel-Palestine* (London: Zed Books, 2007), 91.
124 CAB 24/148.
125 CAB 24/23/0019. Murray's report is dated 28 June 1917.
126 CAB 24/23/0020.
127 Ibid.
128 Yapp, *The Making of the Modern Near East*. Cain and Hopkins, *British Imperialism: Innovation and Expansion*, 399.
129 CAB 24/42, 13 February, *1918 Memorandum on the attitude of Enemy Governments towards Zionism* records debates in Germany about the advantage of Germany allying with Zionism and the consequences of the Balfour letter.
130 Charles D. Smith, *Palestine and the Arab–Israeli Conflict*, 69. See also Barr, *A Line in the Sand, Britain*.
131 John Quigley, *The Case for Palestine: An International Law Perspective* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 1990), 9.
132 Yapp, *The Making of the Modern Near East*, 289. For a more comprehensive evaluation of British influence across the area see Francis Robinson, 'The British Empire and the Muslim World', in *The Oxford History of the British Empire, Vol. IV*, ed. Judith M. Brown and Wm. Roger Louis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 398.
133 Barr, *A Line in the Sand*, 29.
134 FCO 37/2768, 248.
135 Ibid., 248.
136 Walter Lacqueur and Barry Rubin, ed. *The Israel–Arab Reader: A documentary history of the Middle East conflict* (London: Penguin Books, 6 Edition, 2001), 13.
137 Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, 428.
138 CAB 24/21.
139 Ibid., 2. See also McMeekin, *The Berlin–Baghdad Express*, 174.
140 Quigley, *The Case for Palestine*, 8–9. See also Charles D. Smith, *Palestine and the Arab–Israeli Conflict*, 62–63 for references to the De Bunsen Committee 1915.
141 Joel Beinin, *Workers and Peasants in the Modern Middle East* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 44.
142 Charles D. Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 97. 'The Sharif Hussein's first note to Sir Henry McMahon', 14 July 1915.
143 FO37/2768, 167. Letter to Sir Ronald Storrs from Sharif of Mecca 14 July 1915 attached to papers.
144 Charles D. Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 97. Sir Henry McMahon's first note to the Sharif Hussein. 30 August 1915.
145 Ibid., 97.
146 FO 37/2768, 159.
147 Charles D. Smith, *Palestine and the Arab–Israeli Conflict*, 101.
148 CAB 23/1, War Cabinet, 3–4, item 11.
149 See Jonathan Quentin Calvin Newell, *British Military Policy in Egypt and Palestine: August 1914–June 1917* (King's College, PhD Thesis, 1990). Newell argues that Allenby's success was a consequence of additional forces he had at his disposal as a result of a change in strategy which saw the focus of the Eastern front shift from an intended invasion via Haifa to developing the war in the Sinai.
150 Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, 216. Please note although different authors use different spellings I have standardised all spellings as 'Faisal' and as 'Hussein'.

2. THE BALFOUR DECLARATION, SELF-DETERMINATION AND PALESTINIAN OPPOSITION

1 Yapp, *The Making of the Modern Near East*, 277. See also Sevket Pamuk 'The Ottoman Economy in World War I', in *The Economics of World War I*, ed. Stephen Broadberry and Mark Harrison (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).
2 Ibid., 317 *passim*.
3 Ibid., 84–85.
4 Ibid., 246. Higher figures are quoted elsewhere: Albert Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples* (London: Faber and Faber, 1991), 291.
5 Ibid., 246.
6 See McMeekin, *The Berlin–Baghdad Express* (2010) for a view of Germany's strategy towards the Ottoman Empire.
7 Yapp, *The Making of the Modern Near East 1792–1923*, 280.
8 Ibid., 298.
9 Ronald Storrs, *The Memoirs of Sir Ronald Storrs* (New York: G.P. Putnams, 1937), 364.
10 Barr, *A Line in the Sand*, 34.
11 CAB 24/1, *Alexandretta and Mesopotamia*, 1.
12 Ibid., 3.
13 Masalha, *The Bible and Zionism*, 94.
14 Lacqueur, *The History of Zionism*, 103.
15 Victor Kattan, *From Coexistence to Conquest: International Law and the origins of the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1891–1949* (London: Pluto Press, 2009), 30–31.
16 'Zionist Expedition against the Nandi', HC Deb 11 April 1905 vol 144 c1263.
17 Lacqueur, *The History of Zionism*, 121.
18 Ibid.,97.
19 Laqueur, *The History of Zionism*, 124.
20 Theodor Herzl, *The Diaries*, 367, cited in Laqueur, *The History of Zionism*, 120.
21 *The Jewish Chronicle*, 15 December 1905, cited in Martin Gilbert, *Churchill and the Jews* (London: Simon and Shuster, 2007), 11
22 Laqueur, *The History of Zionism, 131*.
23 Joan Comay, *Who's Who in Jewish History* (London: Routledge, Third Edition, Revised by Lavinia Cohn-Sherbok, 2002), 376.
24 Laqueur, *The History of Zionism*, 182.
25 CAB 37/123/43. See also Bernard Wasserstein, *The British in Palestine: The Mandatory Government and the Arab-Jewish conflict 1917–1929* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1978), 74. Jewish by heritage, Samuel himself was an atheist.
26 CAB 37/123/43.
27 Laqueur, *The History of Zionism*, 182
28 Sahar Huneidi, *A Broken Trust: Herbert Samuel, Zionism and the Palestinians* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2001), 10.
29 CAB 24/10.
30 Charles D. Smith, *Palestine and the Arab–Israeli Conflict*, 102–103.
31 CAB 24/10.
32 Board of Deputies – the 'parliament' of the Jewish community in Britain was founded in 1760.
33 CAB 24/24, G.T. 1803 Item 1. Copy of a letter marked 'Secret' from Lord Rothschild to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs 18 July, 1917 and tabled for the War Cabinet.
34 CAB 24/24 Item II, 1 (Also listed as 12).
35 Ibid., III 'Draft reply to Lord Rothschild from Mr. Balfour. Foreign Office August 1917'.
36 Charles D. Smith, *Palestine and the Arab–Israeli Conflict*, Ibid., 102–103.
37 Ibid., Item II Marked 'Enclosure to (1). Draft Declaration'.

38 Ibid., Item III ‘Draft reply to Lord Rothschild from Mr. Balfour. Foreign Office August 1917’.
39 CAB 24/24, G.T. 1803. A. ‘Alternative, by Lord Milner, to Draft Declaration. See II of Paper G. T. 1803’.
40 CAB 24/24, G.T. 1803. Item 111 Marked ‘Enclosure to (1). Draft Reply to Lord Rothschild from Mr. Balfour’. August 1917.
41 CAB 24/24, G.T. 1803. Item 11 Marked ‘Enclosure to (1). Draft Declaration’.
42 Ibid.
43 Ibid.
44 Ibid., 103 (‘Final Text’, 31 October 1917).
45 CAB 24/28, Montagu set out his criticisms in detail on 9 October 1917. He made a list of ‘prominent anti-Zionists’ which he said included ‘every Jew prominent in public life, with the exception of the present Lord Rothschild, Mr Herbert Samuel, and a few others’.
46 CAB 24/144.
47 CAB 24/4. Appendix 1.
48 CAB 37/123/43.
49 Ibid., Note 4.
50 Ibid., Note 8.
51 Ibid., Note 7.
52 Ibid., Note 8. (Emphasis in original).
53 Ibid., Note 9.
54 Ibid., 34–35
55 CAB 24/27, 2.
56 Ibid., 2.
57 Ibid.
58 CAB 24/28, 1.
59 Ibid.
60 Ibid.
61 Ibid.
62 Ibid., 1.
63 Ibid., 2. El Hasa [*sic*] – Al Hasa is a region of what is now Saudi Arabia bordering the Persian Gulf.
64 Ibid., 2.
65 CAB 24/13.
66 CAB 24/30.
67 Charles D. Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 103 (*Final Text*, 31 October 1917).
68 Ibid., 103 (*Final Text*).
69 CAB 23/4 Quoted in Doreen Ingrams, *Palestine Papers 1917–1922: Seeds of Conflict* (London: John Murray, 1972), 13.
70 CAB 24/144.
71 Huneidi, *A Broken Trust*, 27.
72 CAB 27/23. Zionist Commission remit.
73 Sir Ronald Storrs, *Lawrence of Arabia: Zionism and Palestine* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1940), 44.
74 ‘ZIONIST COMMISSION’, HC Deb 18th February 1918 vol 103 cc 436–7.
75 Hertzberg, *The Zionist Idea*, 222.
76 Winston Churchill, *The Illustrated Sunday Herald*, 8 February 1920, cited in Gilbert, *Churchill and the Jews*, 42.
77 Ingrams, 20.
78 Howard Zinn, *A People’s History of the United States*, 361. See also reference to Harman above.

79 CAB 23/5, Item 4. For a detailed appraisal of the negotiations see Chapter XI, Isaac Deutscher, *The Prophet Armed: Trotsky: 1879–1921* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970).
80 CAB 23/8. 19 October 1918.
81 CAB 23/5. Item 8.
82 CAB 23/5. The statement of War Aims made only passing reference to the Near East and no mention of the Balfour Declaration. See also Erez Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 39.
83 CAB 23/5. War Cabinet 312, 3 January, 1918, 5 item 8.
84 CAB 23/5. War Cabinet 312, 3rd January 1918.
85 CAB 23/5. War Cabinet 314, 4 January, 1918, 2 item 3.
86 See ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?doc=62, accessed 4 October 2016. For an examination of Wilson's attitude towards self-determination see Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment*.
87 Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment*, 27.
88 Although Cuba became formally independent in reality it became a *neo-colony* of the USA as a consequence of the Platt Amendment, by which the USA, amongst other things, took control over a number of bases, including Guantanamo Bay, in the country which would only be returned to Cuban sovereignty by mutual agreement.
89 Ibid., 28.
90 The term 'self-determination' never actually appears in the statement. See Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment*. 40.
91 Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution 1917–1923 Vol. 3*, 22. O.S. signifies the Old Style or Julian Calendar subsequently dropped by the new government in 1918 in favour of the Gregorian Calendar.
92 See ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?doc=62, accessed 4 October 2016.
93 There was of course a reversal of this stance by the Soviet government following the death of Lenin who shared Trotsky's support for self-determination especially of the former Tsarist Empire. See Moshe Lewin, *The Soviet Century* (London: Verso, 2005), Chapter 2.
94 Ibid., 184.
95 Florida State University College of Law Archive. USA Department of State International Boundary Study. See archive.law.fsu.edu.
96 Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, 433. He lists the seven to whom the declaration was read in English.
97 Ibid.
98 CAB 23/5.
99 Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, 435.
100 Ibid., 436.
101 CAB 24/10.
102 Charles D. Smith, *Palestine and the Arab–Israeli Conflict*, 87.
103 Ibid., 114. The French were designated as the Mandatory power over Lebanon and Syria following the San Remo Conference of April 1920.
104 CAB 23/44B.
105 Charles D. Smith, *Palestine and the Arab–Israeli Conflict*, 108.
106 Frank E. Manuel, 'Judge Brandeis and the Framing of the Balfour Declaration', in *From Haven to Conquest: Readings in Zionism and the Palestine Problem Until 1948*, ed. Walid Khalidi, (Washington: The Institute for Palestine Studies, Third Printing 2005), 168. Brandeis, whose opinions Wilson valued was being lobbied by Weizmann from whom he had already been cabled a version of the document on 19 September to indicate a favourable attitude to the proposal.

107 Kathleen Christison, *Perceptions of Palestine: Their influence on US Middle East Policy* (London: University of California Press, 2000), 27.
108 Wasserstein, 39.
109 King–Crane Commission Digital Collection, Oberlin College Archives. See dcollections.oberlin.edu.
110 Ibid., 448 Section E (3).
111 Ibid., 448 Section E.
112 Ibid., 440 Appendix G. *Resolutions of the General Syrian Congress*.
113 Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, Appendix H, 443.
114 Huneidi, *A Broken Trust*, 15.
115 See Gilbert, *Churchill and the Jews*, for a detailed account of Churchill's relationship with Chaim Weizmann and Zionism.
116 Charles D. Smith, *Palestine and the Arab–Israeli Conflict*, 103–105.
117 Ibid., 103.
118 Ibid., 105
119 Ingrams, 55.
120 Avi Shlaim, *The Politics of Partition: King Abdullah, the Zionists and Palestine, 1921–1951* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 25.
121 Huneidi, *A Broken Trust*, 19.
122 CAB 37/123/43.
123 Ibid.
124 Ingrams, 105.
125 CAB 24/1156 See also W. F. Abboushi, *The Unmaking of Palestine* (Vermont: Amana Books, 1990), 13.
126 Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern National Consciousness* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 255 note 43.
127 Eugene Rogan, *The Arabs: A History* (London: Allen Lane, 2009), 160 and note 17, 512.
128 Laqueur, *The History of Zionism*, 27.
129 Pamela Ann Smith, *Palestine and the Palestinians 1876–1983* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1984), 26.
130 Barbara J. Smith, *The Roots of Separatism in Palestine*, 10.
131 Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity*, 99–100.
132 Ibid., 100. Khalidi draws attention to the change in the political character of the Jewish immigrants especially after the 1903 and 1905 pogroms in Russia.
133 A. W. Kayyali *Palestine: A Modern History* (London: Croom Helm, n.d.), 179.
134 Kattan, *From Coexistence to Conquest*, 83.
135 Ibid.
136 Ibid., 84.
137 Ibid., 85. Citing FO 371/5121.
138 Huneidi, *A Broken Trust*, 101–102
139 CAB 23/35, 11. Pronouncing on the appointment of religious leaders the Prime Minister declared that 'England has never interfered in these matters'.
140 Charles D. Smith, *Palestine and the Arab–Israeli Conflict*, 109.

3. THE MANDATE AND PALESTINIAN POLITICS

1 A. J. Stockwell, 'Imperialism and Nationalism in South-East Asia', in *The Oxford History of the British Empire Volume IV*, ed. Judith M. Brown and Wm. Roger Louis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 472.
2 Cain and Hopkins, *British Imperialism: Innovation and Expansion 1688–1914;* Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples;* Martin Lynn, 'British Policy, Trade and Informal Empire in the

Mid-Nineteenth Century', in Andrew Porter, ed., *The Oxford History of the British Empire Volume III* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); Joel Beinin, *Workers and Peasants in the Modern Middle East* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

3 Robert Owen, *Studies in the Economic and Social History of Palestine in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, ed., Roger Owen (London: MacMillan Press, 1982), 2.

4 Jacob Norris, *Land of Progress: Palestine in the Age of Colonial Development, 1905–1948* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 37.

5 Şevket Pamuk, *The Ottoman Empire and European Capitalism, 1820–1913: Trade, investment and production* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 102.

6 Schölch, *Palestine in Transformation*. See especially Chapter 5 for a discussion of the use of the term 'feudal', in the context of Palestine and the Ottoman Empire. There is a debate about the appropriateness of the term 'feudal' but I would argue that it is legitimate in the context of Palestine at the time of the Mandate to use it as a description of the forms of land tenure and the obligations of the *fellahin* to the landowners. Schölch provides the following definition: 'Agrarian production and the 'peasant economy' form the economic basis of feudalism. The means of production are effectively in the possession of the peasants who, on their own, organize the working of the land. The 'feudal lord' on whom they depend, appropriates the surplus of their labor in the form of rents – labor, in-kind, and money – by means of 'extra-economic coercion' (relations of coercion and dependence being based not just on economic but on politico-legal factors). This rent tends to be used for consumption purposes. As for the rest of the land over which he exercises control, he either cultivates it himself or has it worked directly for his own account,' 174.

7 Kenneth W. Stein, *The Land Question in Palestine, 1917–1939* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 11.

8 Martin Bunton, *Colonial Land Policies in Palestine 1917–1936* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 36.

9 Ibid.

10 Alexander Schölch, 'European Penetration and the Economic Development of Palestine, 1856–82', in *Studies in the Economic History of Palestine in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, ed., Roger Owen (Oxford: MacMillan Press, 1982).

11 Kayyali, 11. These figures exclude Bedouins. Porath records that in 1931 an estimated 63.5 per cent of the Muslim population worked in agriculture compared to 14.6 per cent of Christians. Yehoshua Porath, *The Emergence of the Palestinian-Arab National Movement: 1918–1929* (London: Frank Cass, 1974), 19.

12 See Albert Hourani, 'Ottoman Reform and the Politics of Notables', in *The Modern Middle East: A Reader*, ed. Albert Hourani, Philip Khoury and Mary C. Wilson, (London: I. B. Tauris, 2011). Hourani in fact distinguishes three types of 'notables' historically in the Ottoman Empire. Those whose influence derived from religious authority, the '*ulama;* the leaders of local garrisons with a degree of military autonomy; and the *a'yan* or 'secular notables'.

13 There has been a wide-ranging discussion in literature on India about the role of *zamindars* as go-betweens in respect of ruling groups and the peasantry, exploring the extent to which they became accessories to British imperial rule. See Meghnad Desai, 'Vortex in India', *New Left Review*, (May-June 1970), 1/61; Premen Addy and Ibne Azad, 'Politics and Culture in Bengal', *New Left Review*, (May-June 1973) 1/79; P. E. Roberts, *History of British India: Under the Company and the Crown* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, Fourth Impression 1980). David Fitzpatrick, 'Ireland and the Empire', in *The Oxford History of the British Empire Volume III*, ed. Andrew Porter (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999) notes the British failure to impose an English model of landownership in Ireland influenced subsequent decisions in India (517).

14 Hourani, 'Ottoman Reform and the Politics of Notables', 87.

15 Gershon Shafir, *Land, Labor and the Origins of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, 1882–1914* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 34.
16 See Appendix A: Porath, *Emergence*, 383.
17 Nathan Weinstock, *Zionism: False Messiah* (London: Ink Links Ltd, 1979), 115.
18 By 1930, of the 1,200,000 *dunams* which had been sold to the settlers, only 75,000 came from Palestinian smallholders. Hillel Cohen, *Army of Shadows: Palestinian Collaboration with Zionism, 1917–1948* (London: University of California Press, 2008), 31.
19 Sarah Graham-Brown, 'The Political Economy of Jabal Nalus, 1920–48' in *Studies in the Economic and Social History of Palestine in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* ed. Roger Owen (London: MacMillan Press, 1982), 126.
20 Shafir, 34.
21 Stein, *The Land Question in Palestine*, 31.
22 Muhammad Y. Muslih, *The Origins of Palestinian Nationalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 71–72.
23 Muslih, 67.
24 Weinstock, *Zionism*, 113.
25 Kayyali, 12.
26 Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples*, 274.
27 Philip S. Khoury, *Urban notables and Arab nationalism: The politics of Damascus 1860–1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 6.
28 Mustafa Kabha, *The Palestinian Press as Shaper of Public Opinion 1929–1939* (London: Valentine Mitchell, 2007), 40.
29 Kayyali, 11. Quoting Arthur Ruppin.
30 Ibid., 11 See also Ann Mosely Lesch, *Arab Politics in Palestine, 1917–1939: The Frustration of a Nationalist Movement* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1979). For a more extensive comment on the nature of the artisan groups see Nathan Weinstock's 'Introduction', in Abram Leon, *The Jewish Question: A Marxist Interpretation* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1970), 43.
31 Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples*, 236.
32 Eugene Rogan, *The Fall of the Ottomans: The Great War in the Middle East 1914–1920* (St. Ives: Penguin Random House UK, 2016), 8.
33 Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, 106–7.
34 Baruch Kimmerling and Joel S. Migdal, *Palestinians: The Making of a People* (New York: The Free Press, 1993), 44. They describe the way in which the coastal cities in particular developed both economically and culturally.
35 Salim Tamari, *Mountains against the Sea: Essays on Palestinian Society and Culture* (Berkley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2009), 168.
36 Porath, *Emergence*, 14.
37 Muslih, 147.
38 Hasan Kayali, 'Elections and the Electoral Process in the Ottoman Empire, 1876–1919', *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 27:3 (August 1995), 269.
39 Ibid., 266.
40 Muslih notes the tendency of the Sultan and the grand vizier to favour certain families, like the al-Khalidi family, when promoting people to military, legal and political posts. He lists a number of members of families from Nablus and Jenin who were appointed because of the perceived loyalty of their families and their towns. Muslih, 50–54. Muslih also explains how Sultan Abdulhamid, despite his promotion of Islam, used certain minority groups in key areas such as Maronite Christians for example. Patronage continued to be a feature of Palestinian society into the twentieth century.
41 Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity*, 76.
42 Ibid., 85.

43 Porath, *Emergence*, 29. Quoting *Filastin* 12.7.13, 2.8.13.
44 Muslih, 79.
45 Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, 109. Porath makes the point that whilst there were branches of the party in Nablus, Jenin, Tul-Karm and Jaffa, there was not one in Jerusalem. He ascribes this fact to the integration of the leading Jerusalem families into the Ottoman Empire. Porath, *Emergence*, 23.
46 Muslih, 132.
47 Porath, *Emergence*, 24.
48 Muslih, 91.
49 Ibid., 89.
50 Huneidi, *A Broken Trust*, 35.
51 Porath, *Emergence*, 24.
52 CAB 24/37.
53 Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*. Appendix H, 453. Recommendations of the King–Crane Commission with Regard to Syria–Palestine and Iraq.
54 Muslih, 157. A number of this younger generation were educated in Istanbul and subsequently held government appointments only later to be dismissed for being critical of the CUP and expressing pro-Arabist sentiments.
55 Kayyali, 61.
56 Kayyali, 79. Muslih suggests it was founded in early June 1920, 150.
57 Ilan Pappe, *A History of Modern Palestine: One Land, Two Peoples* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 79.
58 Muslih, 160.
59 Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, 111 and 119. See also Maxime Rodinson, *Marxism and the Muslim World* (London: Zed Books, 2015), 25.
60 Muslih, 95.
61 Jonathan Schneer, *The Balfour Declaration: The Origins of the Arab-Israeli Conflict* (London: Bloomsbury, 2010), 54.
62 Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, 157.
63 Charles D. Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 97; Porath, *Emergence*, 70; Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, 414; Muslih, 94.
64 Charles D. Smith, *Palestine and the Arab–Israeli Conflict*, 97.
65 CAB 24/1.
66 Porath, *Emergence*, 80.
67 Hassassian, Manuel, *Palestine: Factionalism in the National Movement (1919–1939)* (Jerusalem: PASSIA, 1990), 33.
68 Muslih, 181.
69 Porath, *Emergence*, 82.
70 Ibid., 61. This position had also been adopted by the Syrian Congress of July 1919.
71 Porath, *Emergence*, 80. In the opinion of Porath the split represented an attempt by the 'older' Jerusalemite families to establish their preeminence in an independent Palestine in opposition to the younger participants who would have little to gain from such a decision and therefore preferred unity with Faisal and Syria.
72 Muslih, 184.
73 Ibid., 85.
74 CAB 24/153.
75 CAB 28/78.
76 Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment*, 58–59. Panama had a smaller population than Palestine.
77 Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, 287. See also Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment*, 59.
78 Kayyali, 62.

79 Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment*, 59.
80 CAB 24/37.
81 Shlaim, *The Politics of Partition*, 40.
82 Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, 438. Appendix F. Antonius queries the date of the signing of the Faisal-Weizmann agreement but only by a matter of a day or more.
83 Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, 437, Appendix F.
84 Shlaim, *The Politics of Partition*, 41. Lesch, *Arab Politics* records that Faisal gave a detailed interview to the *Jewish Chronicle* (3 October 1919) repudiating the agreement with Weizmann. Lesch, *Arab Politics*, 133.
85 CAB 24/145.
86 Ibid.
87 Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, 441, Appendix G.
88 CAB 24/156.
89 Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples*, 317. The British faced challenges to their rule in Egypt 1919, Iraq (1920), Ireland and in India the Congress Movement established the non-co-operation movement in September 1920. (See M.E. Yapp, *The Near East since the First World War: A History to 1995* (London: Longman, 1997), 51.
90 CAB 24/79.
91 CAB 24/95. December 1919 'A Monthly Review of Revolutionary Movements in Foreign Countries'. The report on Egypt notes links between revolutionaries in Britain with Egyptian nationalists and the storing of arms in Palestine.
92 CAB 24/95. Directorate of Intelligence Secret Report No. 34. See also CAB 24/39 which reproduces a 6 December 1917 'manifesto' published by wireless 'To all the Labouring-class Moslems of Russia and the East' which proclaimed that 'the secret treaties … are torn in pieces and destroyed.'
93 Huneidi, *A Broken Trust*, 18–19. The Mandates were ultimately promulgated by the League of Nations on 29 September 1923 confirming that Palestine would be assigned to the British.
94 CAB 24/156.
95 The King-Crane Commission based its findings on Syria on the principle enunciated by President Woodrow Wilson: 'The settlement of every question, whether of territory, of sovereignty, of economic arrangement, or of political relationship upon the basis of the free acceptance of that settlement by the people immediately concerned, and not upon the basis of the material interest or advantage of any other nation or people'. (Cited in Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, 449).
96 King–Crane Commission Digital Collection, Oberlin College Archives. RG 2/6, box 128, folder 2. See dcollections.oberlin.edu.
97 Ibid.
98 Ibid. Chaim Weizmann, unsurprisingly, also took the view that the Palestinians were not ready for self-determination. See report of speech CAB 24/145. 27 April 1918.
99 Kayyali, 84.
100 Porath, *Emergence*, 96.
101 Muslih, 150.
102 FO 371/5121, 31.
103 Ibid.
104 FO 371/5121.
105 FO 371/5121.
106 FO 371/5121.
107 Khoury, *Urban notables and Arab nationalism*, 90.
108 Muslih, 201.
109 Khoury, *Urban notables and Arab nationalism*, 92.

110 Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, 314.
111 CAB 24/126.
112 Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, 312.
113 CAB 37/123.
114 A. J. Sherman, *Mandate Days: British Lives in Palestine, 1918–1948* (London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1997), 55.
115 Ingrams, 111. Lesch, *Arab Politics*, 91.
116 Huneidi, *A Broken Trust*, 120.
117 Muslih, 207.
118 Kayyali, 88.
119 Muslih, 207.
120 Muslih, 163. The Executive Committee formerly played the leading role in Palestinian politics from 1920 until 1935 though its influence varied in significance throughout this period.
121 Porath, *Emergence*, 128.
122 CAB 24/126.
123 CAB 24/126. Appendix 23.
124 Ibid.
125 CAB 24/126.
126 Ibid. In his reply Churchill reiterated the commitment of the British not to turn Palestine into '*the* National Home for the Jews' but rather to create '*a* National Home for the Jews'.
127 Ibid.
128 Porath, *Emergence*, 116.
129 Abboushi, *The Unmaking of Palestine*, 18.
130 *Palestine: Disturbances in May 1921. Reports of the Commission of Inquiry with Correspondence Relating thereto*. Cmd. 1540. Hereafter *Haycraft Commission Report*.
131 CAB 24/125.
132 Porath, *Emergence*, 65.
133 League of Nations Archives. C-372-M-260–192. See biblio-archive.unog.ch.
134 Porath, *Emergence*, 117.
135 *Haycraft Commission Report*, Cmd. 1540, 57.
136 Kayyali, 92–93.
137 *Haycraft Commission Report*, Cmd. 1540, 12.
138 Ibid, 44.
139 Ibid.
140 Ibid., 51.
141 Hillel Cohen, *Year Zero of the Arab-Israeli Conflict 1929* (Waltham: Brandeis University Press, 2015), 55.
142 *Haycraft Commission Report*, Cmd. 54.
143 *Haycraft Commission Report*, Cmd. 154018.
144 Barbara J. Smith, *The Roots of Separatism in Palestine*, 137.
145 Owen (1982), 116.
146 Zachary Lockman, *Comrades and Enemies: Arab and Jewish Workers in Palestine, 1906–1948* (London: University of California Press, 1996), 71. Lockman points out that the Palestinian urban population grew at a greater rate than the population generally – especially in Haifa and Jaffa.
147 Huneidi, *A Broken Trust*, 135.
148 *Haycraft Commission Report*,. Cmd. 1540, 57.
149 Ingrams, 136.

4. SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL FEATURES OF PALESTINIAN RESISTANCE

1 CAB 24/154.
2 Dr. Mahdi Abdul Hardi, ed., *Documents on Palestine, Volume 1* (Jerusalem: PASSIA, 2007), 78.
3 CAB 24/157. Cabinet took frequent detailed economic reports on Palestine.
4 Beshara Doumani, *Rediscovering Palestine: Merchants and Peasants in Jabal Nablus 1700–1900* (Berkley: University of California Press, 1995), 187.
5 Abdul Hadi, ed., *Documents on Palestine: Volume 1*, 75.
6 Barbara J. Smith, *The Roots of Separatism in Palestine*, 30.
7 CAB 24/215.
8 Ibid.
9 CAB 23/50.
10 Barbara J. Smith, *The Roots of Separatism in Palestine*, 35.
11 CAB 24/193.
12 Barbara J. Smith, *The Roots of Separatism in Palestine*, 31.
13 Ibid., 25. Citing CO 733/63.
14 CAB 24/140.
15 Barbara J. Smith, *The Roots of Separatism in Palestine*, 15.
16 Ibid., 175. P£ – Palestinian pounds.
17 Porath, *Emergence*, 243.
18 Irfan Habib, 'Understanding 1857', 64.
19 Sarah Graham-Brown in 'The Political Economy of the Jabal Nablus, 1920–48', drawing on Leon Trotsky, uses the expression 'uneven and combined' development to describe this phenomenon which could also be applied to the economic, social and political fields, 89.
20 Comay, 317.
21 Barbara J. Smith, *The Roots of Separatism in Palestine*, 117.
22 United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine, *Note on Currency and Banking in Palestine and TransJordan*.
23 Barbara J. Smith, *The Roots of Separatism in Palestine*, 29.
24 Ibid., 177.
25 Ibid., 179. Lesch, *Arab Politics*, 119.
26 See Jacob Metzer, *The divided economy of Mandatory Palestine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998) for an example of this line of argument.
27 Sarah Graham-Brown, 'The Political Economy of Jabal Nalus, 1920–48', 140.
28 Porath, *Emergence*, 208.
29 For an important insight into the thinking of Palestinian capitalists see Sherene Seikaly, *Men of Capital: Scarcity and Economy in Mandate Palestine* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016).
30 Ghassan Kanafani, *The 1936–1939 Revolt in Palestine* (London: Tricontinental Society, 1980), Quoting the Collection of Arab testimonies in Palestine before the British Royal Commission. (Damascus: Al-Itidal Press, 1938), 54.
31 *Haycraft Commission Report*, 52.
32 Zeev Sternhell, *The Founding Myths of Israel* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 179.
33 Ibid., 183.
34 Barbara J. Smith, *The Roots of Separatism in Palestine*, 156. (P£1 = 1,000 mils.).
35 Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (London: Bogle L'Ouverture Publications Limited, Revised edition, 1988), 149.

36 Shafir, 60. See also Lockman, *Comrades and Enemies*. Musa Budeiri, *The Palestine Communist Party 1919–1948* (London: Ithaca, 1979).
37 Deborah S. Bernstein, *Constructing Boundaries: Jewish and Arab Workers in Mandatory Palestine* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000), 122.
38 Sternhell, *The Founding Myths of Israel*, 178.
39 Barabara J. Smith, *The Roots of Separatism in Palestine*, 143.
40 Lockman, *Comrades and Enemies*, 74. David Ben-Gurion, a leader in the *Histadrut* movement advocated a pragmatic alliance between Jews and Palestinians in certain areas of employment in order to preserve the relative privileges that Jewish workers had. The character of the split in the *Histadrut* between Ben-Gurion and the supporters of Shlomo Kaplansky appeared at the third Congress of *Ahdut Ha'avoda* in May 1924. (Lockman, *Comrades and Enemies*, 78).
41 Zachary Lockman, 'Arab Workers and Arab Nationalism', in *Rethinking Nationalism in the Arab Middle East*, eds., James Jankowski and Israel Gershoni, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 250. Some pro-Zionist Jews also attempted to create the Palestine Labour League as an Arab wing of the *Histadrut*.
42 Lockman, *Comrades and Enemies*, 86. The site on which the factory was being built was sold to Michael Pollack, a Zionist from Russia, by the Sursuq family which had been involved in land sales elsewhere.
43 Bernstein, *Constructing Boundaries*, 23–24.
44 Budeiri, *The Palestine Communist Party*, 41.
45 Lockman, *Comrades and Enemies*, 181. Lesch, *Arab Politics*, 64.
46 Lockman, *Comrades and Enemies*, 8.
47 Haycraft makes reference to some of the splits within the Jewish 'socialist' oriented organisations including *Achduth Haavodah* which was led by David Ben-Gurion. The different political positions of the neo-socialist groups within the *Yishuv* were the products of debates taking place especially within the Eastern European socialist and communist groups on the question of the Jews and the National Question. A flavour of the debate can be gleaned from John Riddell, ed., *Lenin's Struggle for a Revolutionary International: Documents: 1907–1916 The Preparatory Years* (New York: Monad Press, 1984), especially the section 'The Discussions in the Zimmerwald Left', 327.
48 Metzer, 112.
49 Lockman, *Comrades and Enemies*, 53.
50 Lockman and others have used the term 'socialist Zionism' or 'labour Zionism' to describe currents which traced their origins back to socialist organisations. However 'socialism' underwent a split during the First World War between the Second International and the newly formed Third International. Organisations whose social composition and organizational forms derived from trade unionism arose which in some cases were imbued with corporatist politics. 'Plebian', 'populist' or even 'corporatist' Zionism might be more appropriate than 'labour Zionism'. See also Sternhell, 217. Zeev Sternhell uses the term 'Nationalist Socialism'.
51 Bernstein, 25.
52 Barbara J. Smith, *The Roots of Separatism in Palestine*, 136.
53 Pappe, *A History of Modern Palestine*, 17.
54 Ellen L. Fleischmann, *The Nation and its 'New' Women: The Palestinian Women's Movement 1920–1948* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 108.
55 Fleischmann, *The Nation and its 'New' Women*, 111.
56 Kabha, 19.
57 Lesch, *Arab Politics*, 63.
58 Ibid.
59 Fleischmann, *The Nation and its 'New' Women*, 95.

60 Rogan, *The Arabs: A History*, 200. Rogan, makes the assertion that the organisation that was established by the Congress, the Arab Women's Association, was a 'hybrid of the politics of Palestinian nationalism and the upper-middle-class culture of British county ladies'. This seems a somewhat gratuitous comment given that women in the United Kingdom only attained electoral equality with men in 1928.
61 Ted Swedenburg, *Memories of Revolt: The 1936–1939 Rebellion and the Palestinian National Past* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), 176. Swedenburg is citing a letter from the High Commissioner Sir Arthur Grenfell Wauchope. CO 733/239/5.
62 Kayyali, 11.
63 Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity*, 46.
64 Ibid., 225. Note 33.
65 Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity*, 126, 193. Kabha notes that the first Arabic newspaper, *al-Waqa'l' al Misriyya* was published by Muhammad Ali in Egypt in 1828 and that the first paper published in Beirut *Majmou'at Fawa'id* can be dated at 1851. In 1876, 30 years after the first printing press arrived in Palestine, two newspapers which belonged to the Ottoman government began to be published: *al-Quds al-Sharif* and *al-Ghazal*.
66 Lesch, *Arab Politics*, 67. See also Salim Tamari, *Mountains against the Sea: Essays on Palestinian Society and Culture* (Berkley: University of California Press, 2009), comments on the expansion of cafés and their role in society, 178.
67 Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity*, 43.
68 Kabha, 18.
69 Porath, *Emergence*, 21.
70 Kabha, xv.
71 Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity*, 127. Khalidi mentions Beirut based *al-Ittihad al-'Uthmani* which reprinted articles from *al-Karmil* and *Filastin*, 137.
72 Ibid., 126.
73 Ibid., 144.
74 Ibid., 137.
75 Kabha, 46–47. See also CAB 24/140.
76 CAB 24/140, 4.
77 CAB 24/207.
78 Kabha, 72.
79 The full name of the society, which had been founded in Paris in 1911 was *al-Jam'iyya al-arabiyya al'-fatat* (The Young Arab Society). Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, 111.
80 Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, 98. Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity*, 152.
81 Ibid., 97. Amongst other influential writers to emerge at the turn of the century, the Syrian born writer 'Abdul-Rahman Kawakebi has been noted as an important contributor to the development of a Pan-Arabist perspective distinguishing between his opinions and those of the Pan-Islamist Jamaluddin al-Afghani who advocated the unity of the whole of Islam.
82 Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity*, 125.
83 Ibid., 125.
84 CAB 24/129.
85 *Haycraft Commission Report*, 56.
86 Lesch, *Arab Politics*, 65.
87 Muslih, 169.
88 Christopher Hill, *The English Bible and the Seventeenth Century Revolution* (London: Allen Lane, 1993).
89 Ilan Pappe, *The Rise and Fall of a Palestinian Dynasty: The Husseinis 1700–1948* (London: Saqi Books, 2010), 175.
90 Cohen, *Army of Shadows*, 46.

91 Ibid.
92 Kayyali, 180.
93 Porath, *Emergence*, 192. See also Muslih, (166ff.) for a brief account of the political background of al-Hajj Amin al-Husseini and Khalidi, (189). For a more detailed account of his life see Philip Mattar, *The Mufti of Jerusalem: Al-Hajj Amin Al-Husseini and the Palestinian National Movement* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988).
94 CAB 24/39. Memorandum on 'The Formula of 'Self-Determination of Peoples' and the Moslem World', 10 January 1918.
95 Ibid.
96 Ibid.
97 Huneidi, *A Broken Trust*, 146.
98 Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, 109.
99 FO. 371/5203 Cited in Ingrams, 106.
100 CAB 24/140.
101 Gilbert, *Churchill and the Jews*, 72. Gilbert states that the meeting took place on 22 August 1921 whilst Porath has 12 August. In fact a number of meetings took place with delegation not leaving London until July 1922.
102 Huneidi, 162.
103 Lesch, 163.
104 Charles D. Smith, Palestine and the Arab–Israeli Conflict, 159.
105 CAB 24/138.
106 CAB 24/136.
107 Kayyali, 113. Porath, *Emergence*, 116.
108 Kayyali, 111.
109 Ibid., 114.
110 Ibid. Quoting Arabic and British sources.
111 CAB 24/158.
112 Kayyali, 116.
113 Kayyali, 116. See also Huneidi, *A Broken Trust*, 228–229.
114 CAB 24/140.
115 CAB 24/159.
116 CAB 24/159.
117 Ibid.
118 Porath, *Emergence*, 111.
119 Kayyali. 119.
120 Ibid., 120.
121 Porath, *Emergence*, 111.
122 Kayyali (119). Porath, *Emergence*, (179) refers to it as the Anglo–Hejazi or British–Hejazi Treaty.
123 CAB 23/46. See notes of 'Committee on Palestine'.
124 Ibid. Clayton worked as an intelligence officer in the army and was appointed chief secretary to the Mandate administration by Samuel in April 1923.
125 CAB 23/46
126 Porath, *Emergence*, 174.
127 Porath, *Emergence*, 181.
128 Kayyali, 120.
129 Porath, *Emergence*, 215. Porath records that the Arab Department of the Zionist Executive had in fact been working since the summer of 1921 to co-ordinate the opposition to the Arab Executive.
130 Ibid., 229.

131 Cohen, *Army of Shadows*, 16.
132 Ibid., 20.
133 Pappe, *The Rise and Fall of a Palestinian Dynasty*, 231.
134 Budeiri, *The Palestine Communist Party*, 17.
135 Lesch, 110.
136 Yehoshua Porath, *The Palestinian Arab National Movement, From Riots to Rebellion, Volume Two 1929–1939*, [London: Frank Cass, 1977], 122.
137 Porath, *Emergence*, 62.
138 Porath, *The Palestinian Arab National Movement*, 64.
139 Budeiri, *The Palestine Communist Party*, 12.
140 E.H. Carr in *The Bolshevik Revolution 1917–1923, Volume 1* of his work *A History of Soviet Russia*. Jane Degras, ed., *Soviet Documents on Foreign Policy* (London: Oxford University Press, 1951), 16. See FO 371, File 117 for examples of the preoccupation of various consuls with the spread of Bolshevik influence mainly in Syria and the apprehension that a Bolshevik Division of troops was about to link up with Divisions of the Turkish army.
141 John Riddell, ed., *To See the Dawn: Baku, 1920 First Congress of the Peoples of the East* (New York: Pathfinder, 1993), 288, Appendix 7c.
142 Lockman, *Comrades and Enemies*, 89.
143 Budeiri, *The Palestine Communist Party*, 41.
144 CAB 24/159.
145 Maxime Rodinson, *Marxism and the Muslim World* (London: Zed Books, Edition 2015), 93.
146 Budeiri, *The Palestine Communist Party*, 15–16.
147 Budeiri, *The Palestine Communist Party*, 60.

5. BRITISH RESPONSES TO PALESTINIAN CHALLENGES

1 Walter Lacqueur and Barry Rubin, eds., *The Israel-Arab Reader*, (London: Penguin Books, 2001), 31.
2 Ibid., 32–3.
3 Tom Segev, *One Palestine, Complete: Jews and Arabs Under the British Mandate* (London: Abacus, 1999), 210. Segev cites issues of the newspaper in evidence.
4 Wasserstein, 59.
5 Sahar Huneidi, *The Broken Trust*, 140.
6 CAB 24/126.
7 CAB 24/159.
8 Lesch, 47.
9 Walid Khalidi, ed., *From Haven to Conquest, Readings in Zionism and the Palestine Problem Until 1948*, (Washington: The Institute for Palestine Studies, Third Printing 2005), 371. Naomi Shepherd, *Ploughing Sand: British rule in Palestine*, (London: John Murray, 1999) 196.
10 Lesch, 47.
11 Abboushi, *The Unmaking of Palestine*, 184.
12 Article 11, League of Nations Mandate. The 'Jewish agency' mentioned in Article 4 is the 'Zionist Organisation'.
13 Ibid.
14 Barbara J Smith, *The Roots of Separatism in Palestine*, 117.
15 Ibid., 167.
16 Barbara J Smith, *The Roots of Separatism in Palestine*, 177.
17 Bernstein, 112. Horsepower usage increased by a factor of 12 between 1925 and 1937.
18 Lesch, 56.
19 Laqueur, *The History of Zionism*, 465. See Laqueur's account of splits in Zionism in the USA, 456ff.

20 CAB 24/270 Peel Report.
21 Sternhell, *The Founding Myths of Israel*, 217.
22 Comay, 277.
23 Barbara J. Smith, *The Roots of Separatism*, 128.
24 Nur Masalha, *Expulsion of the Palestinians: The concept of 'Transfer', in Zionist Political Thought, 1882–1948* (Washington: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1992), 31.
25 Ilan Pappe, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*, (Oxford: One World, 2006). See Chapter 2, 'The Drive for an Exclusively Jewish State'.
26 Masalha, *The Bible & Zionism*, 53.
27 Jacob Norris, *Land of Progress, Palestine in the Age of Colonial Development, 1905- 1948* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 183.
28 Angus Maddison has explained that the far greater proportion of investment in the USA in fields of research and development led to much higher levels of return on capital in the country in comparison with Western Europe for example. This may have contributed to the economic development of the *Yishuv*. Angus Maddison, *The World Economy: A Millennial Perspective* (Paris: OECD, 2001), 103.
29 Laqueur, *A History of Zionism*, 315.
30 Porath, *The Palestinian Arab National Movement*, 82.
31 Ibid. All figures based on calculations using statistics sourced by Porath.
32 Stein, *The Land Question in Palestine*, 142.
33 Ibid., 143.
34 Porath, *From Riots to Rebellion*, 86.
35 There is an interesting parallel here with the 1798 United Irishmen Rising against the British in which a similar division took place between social layers. One of the reasons for defeat of the movement according to D.R. O'Connor Lysaght was the 'dissensions within the movement between the wealthier bourgeoisie, who were prepared to threaten, but not fight, and who were the official leaders, and the professional revolutionaries (like Wolfe Tone), the peasants and artisan who were less squeamish.' D.R. O'Connor Lysaght, *The Republic of Ireland*, (Cork: The Mercier Press, 1970).14.
36 Kayyali, 130. Mohamed Ali Eltaher was a prolific newspaper publisher in Cairo. See (http://eltaher.org/index_en.html). Records stored at the Library of Congress.
37 Porath, *Emergence*, 215.
38 Porath, *Emergence*, 224.
39 CAB 24/215 Sir John Hope-Simpson, *Palestine. Report on Immigration, Land Settlement and Development*, 1 October 1930, Cmd. 3686.
40 Porath, *In search of Arab Unity, 1930 – 1945*.(London: Frank Cass, 1986), 114.
41 Ibid., 214. See also Cohen, *Army of Shadows*, 66.
42 Kayyali, 137. Porath, *Emergence*, 216.
43 Kayyali, 134. Porath, *Emergence*, 250. In an effort to display unity to the British the President of the National Party acted as the chief spokesperson of the delegation which met the Colonial Secretary, L.S. Amery in 1925.
44 Porath, *Emergence*. 252.
45 Ibid., 253.
46 Ibid., 254.
47 Budeiri, 46.
48 CAB 24/248. Cunliffe-Lister also observed in his Memorandum that 'If the Arabs were cleverer propagandists, they could put their case against exclusive Jewish employment in a very telling way. They could say that the charge against Hitler is that he had refused Jews employment in Germany; is it reasonable that Jewish immigrants to Palestine, entering in increasing numbers, should refuse employment to the Arab population?'

49 Peter A. Shambrook, *French Imperialism in Syria: 1927–1936* (Reading: Ithaca Press, 1998), 3.
50 Malcolm Yapp, *The Near East since the First World War, A History to 1995*, second edition (London and New York: Longman, 1996), 92–93.
51 Shambrook, *French Imperialism in Syria*, 20.
52 Kayyali, 135.
53 Porath, *Emergence*, 203. Porath citing *Filastin* says Amin al-Husseini in fact used the money for his own political ends. *Filastin* of course tended to support the Nashashibis.
54 Laila Parsons, *The Commander: Fawzi Al-Qawukji and the Fight for Arab Independence 1914–1948* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2016), 107.
55 Yehoshua Porath, *In search of Arab Unity, 1930 – 1945* (London: Frank Cass, 1986), 3.
56 Wasserstein, 159.
57 CAB 24/270.
58 Wasserstein, 161.
59 Wasserstein, 160–161.
60 Ibid., 27.
61 Ibid., 210.
62 Muslih, 26. See also Lesch, 26. Porath, *Emergence*, 208.
63 CAB 24/140. See also: CAB 24/126.
64 Kayyali, 116.
65 Kayyali, 133.
66 Porath, *Emergence*, 213.
67 CAB 24/126. The Deputation presented a document in Cairo to Winston Churchill outlining in detail the position of the Haifa Third Palestinian National Congress.
68 CAB 24/126.
69 Porath, *Emergence*, 65.
70 Porath, *Emergence*, 186.
71 Huneidi, 148.
72 Ibid., 205.
73 Rachid Khalidi, *The Iron Cage: The struggle for Palestinian Statehood*, (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2006), 56.
74 Porath, *Emergence*, 196.
75 Ibid., 247.
76 Ibid., 250.
77 Cohen, *Year Zero*, xi.
78 CAB 24/211. Shaw Commission Report. Cmd. 3530
79 Cohen, *Year Zero*, xvii.
80 Kayyali, 142. Porath, *Emergence*, 258. Porath's account of the prehistory surrounding the area suggests that it was venerated more by the Jews in Jerusalem than the Muslims is contentious.
81 Cohen, *Year Zero*, xxi.
82 Kayyali, 156. The reality of the developing situation in part lay behind these changes. Kayyali records the actions of the 'Green Hand Gang' which began as an anti-Jewish group but then was forced to respond to the British armed forces who pursued them.
83 Ibid., 145.
84 CAB 24/207.
85 Ibid.
86 Ibid. The Commission referred to is the Shaw Commission appointed in September 1929.
87 CAB 24/207.
88 Musa Budeiri outlines the debates within the Palestine Communist Party and the Comintern about the nature of the 1929 events in particular; the question of the Arabisation of the Party

and the orientation it should take towards the situation. See Chapter II of *The Palestine Communist Party*.

89 CAB 24/211. The Commission report reaffirmed standard British policy with the traditional assertion that the Mandate included a commitment to both the Jewish and the Palestinian communities.

90 Ibid.

91 CAB 24/205

92 Porath, *From Riots to Rebellion*, 277.

93 CO 733/190/1

94 CAB 24/248

95 Ibid.

96 Ibid.

97 Lacqueur, 504.

98 Weinstock, *Zionism*, 134. See also Francis R. Nicosia, *The Third Reich and the Palestine Question* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1985), Appendix 7, 'Jewish Legal Immigration to Palestine, 1933–1940'.

99 Lacqueur, 507.

100 Weinstock, *Zionism*, 137.

101 Ibid., 144–145.

102 Ibid., 144.

103 CAB 24/215.

104 CAB 24/202.

105 CAB 24/262. See also Nicosia, 72ff. Hitler's focus was on Europe and seeing the virtual failure of British attempts to restrain Mussolini in Ethiopia encouraged him to occupy the Saar. His position replicated that adopted by the German Government during World War One and the *Drang nach Osten* policy.

106 Mussolini was expelled from the Italian Socialist Party because of his opposition to the party's neutrality during the war.

107 Weinstock, Zionism, 150. Lacqueur, 126.

108 M.E. Yapp, *The Near East since the First World War, A History to 1995*, second edition (London and New York: Longman, 1996), 58. Lockman, 235.

109 The most significant was the Hoare–Laval Pact which negotiated concessions to the Italians and was universally denounced as a betrayal of the Ethiopian Government.

110 Porath, *In Search of Arab Unity: 1930–1946*.

111 CAB 23/80.

112 CAB 24/125. The average family was estimated to have 5.5 members so this figure equates to 140,646 of a total of 478,390 people living in the rural areas.

113 CAB 24/215. Cmd. 3686.

114 CAB 24/215.

115 Ibid.

116 Lesch, 56.

117 Laqueur, *The History of Zionism*, 492.

118 Ibid., 493.

119 Walter Lacqueur and Barry Rubin, eds., *The Israel-Arab Reader*, 37.

120 Lesch 56. Walter Lacqueur and Barry Rubin, eds., *The Israel-Arab Reader*, 39.

121 Kayyali, 162. The Palestinian community named the communication the 'Black Letter'.

122 CAB 24/215.

123 Ibid.

124 Exact statistics on unemployment for the Palestinian community are not easily available but there are accounts in the Hope Simpson Report of 2,050 unemployed Palestinian workers in

Haifa alone and large numbers of applicants for a job in Ramleh.

125 See unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/AA1CA3C5176A0915052565D7005C1BC3 (accessed 1 October 2015).

126 Fleischmann, *The Nation and its 'New' Women: The Palestinian Women's Movement 1920–1946*.

127 This phenomenon of youth groups adopting some of the appearances of fascist youth organisations was replicated in the ranks of the Revisionist Zionists as well.

128 Porath, *Riots to Rebellion*, 120.

129 Kimmerling and Migdal, 89, 92.

130 Porath, *Riots to Rebellions*, Appendix B. Officers of the Revolt.

131 Kayyali, 167.

6. THE MANDATE IN CONTEXT

1 Norris, *Land of Progress*, 184. See the detailed account of the British and French dispute over control of the chemical resources of the Dead Sea.

2 J.M.N. Jeffries, *The Palestine Deception 1915–1923: The McMahon–Hussein Correspondence, the Balfour Declaration and the Jewish National Home* (Washington: Institute for Palestine Studies, 2014), 142. The book contains articles written in 1923 for the *Daily Mail* by Jeffries.

3 Zinn, *A People's History of the United States*, 382.

4 Gilbert, *Churchill and the Jews*, 120.

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